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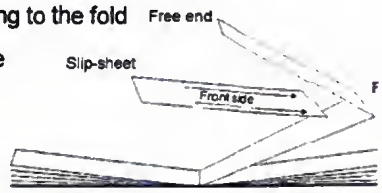

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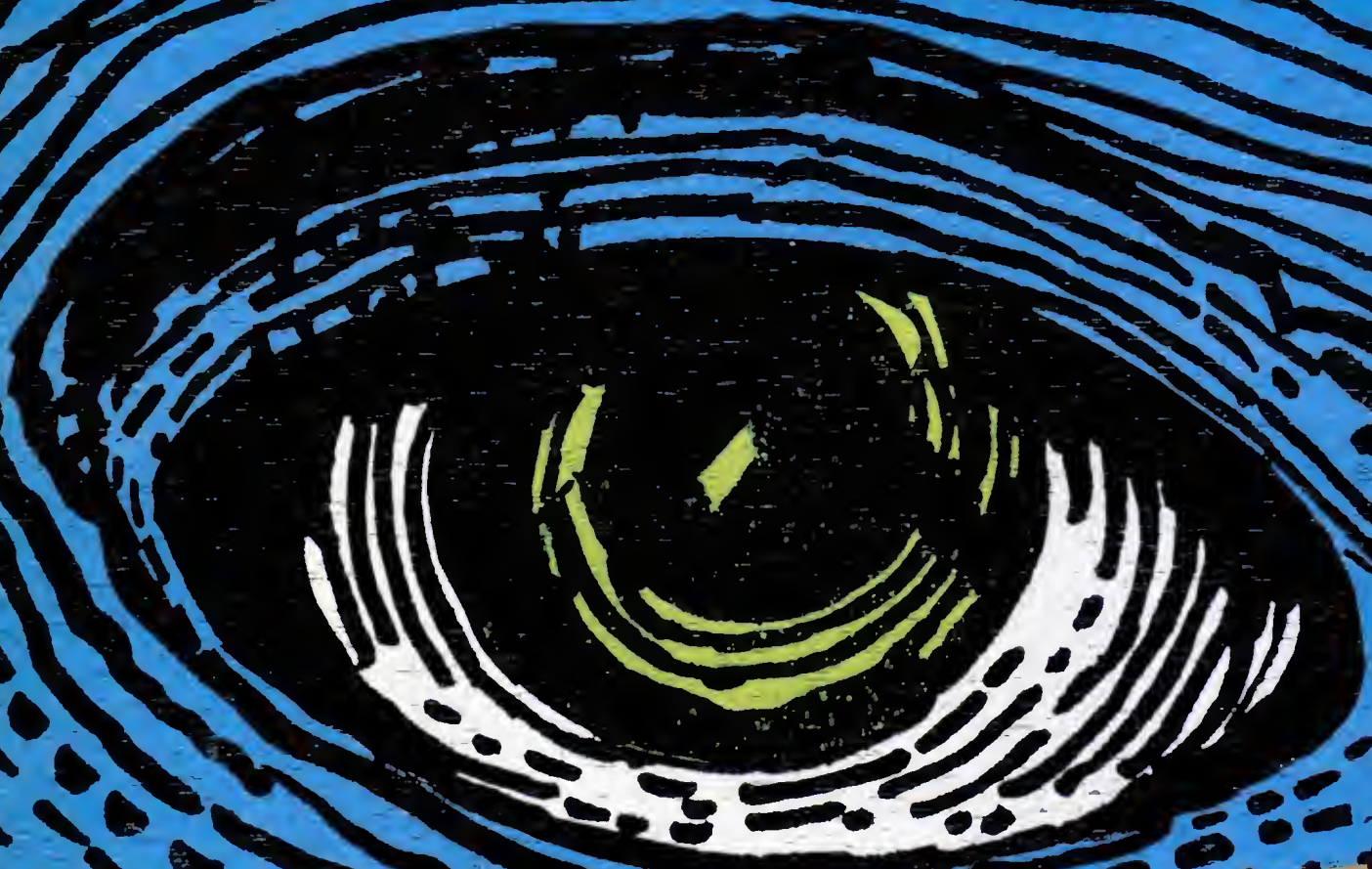

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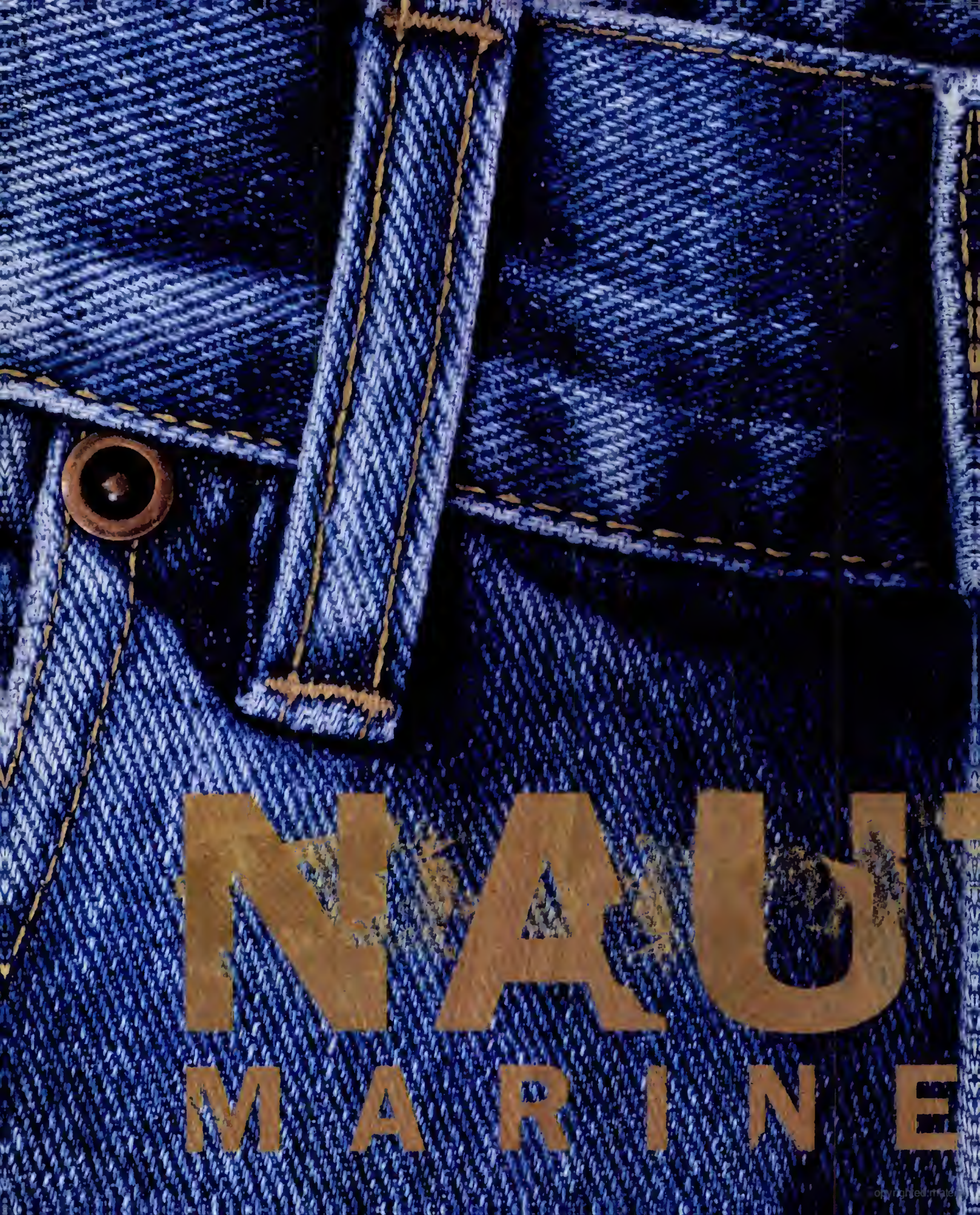

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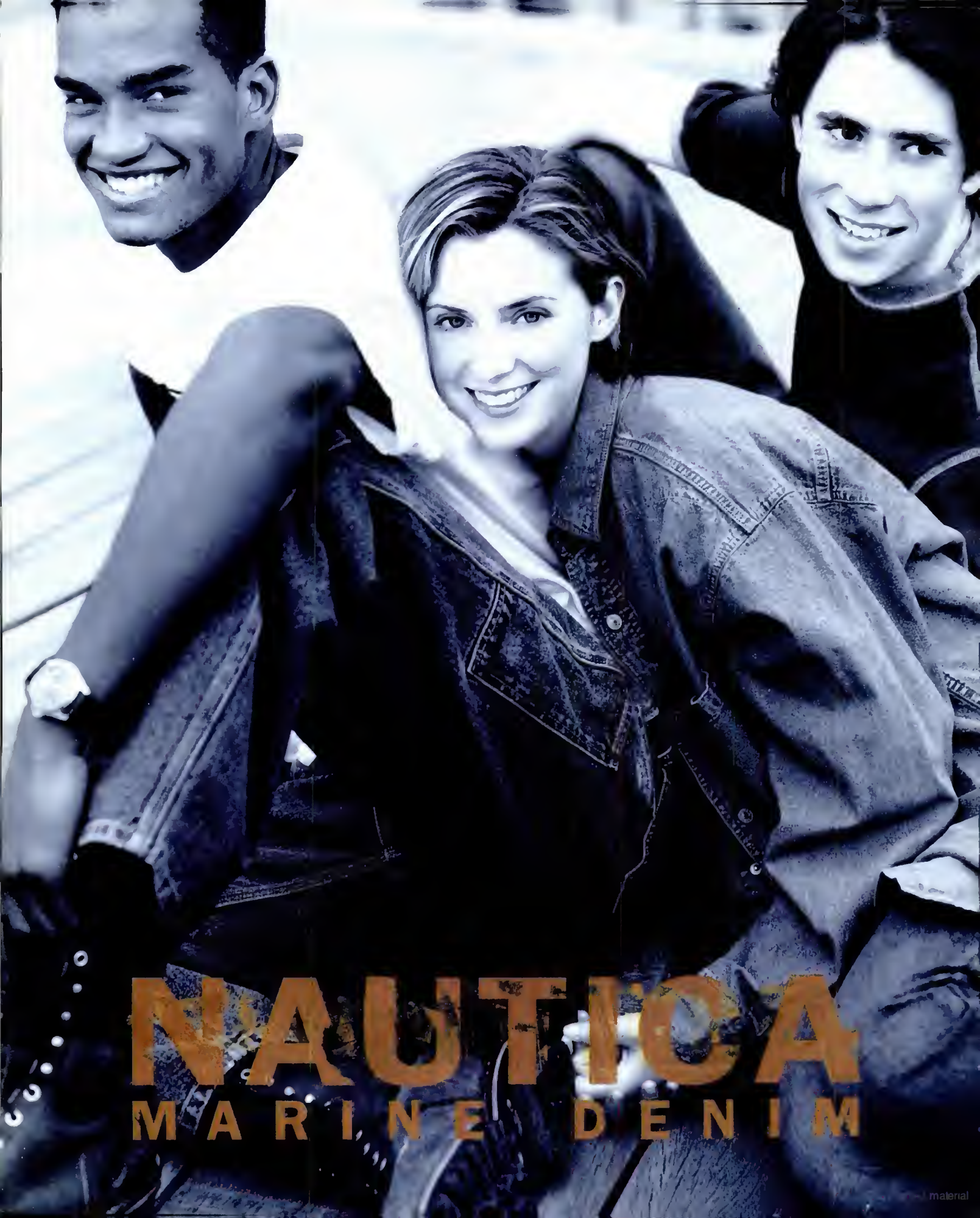

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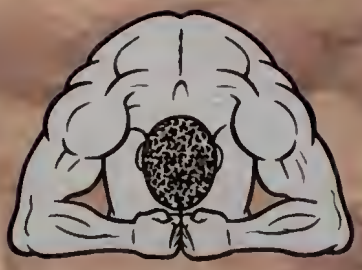

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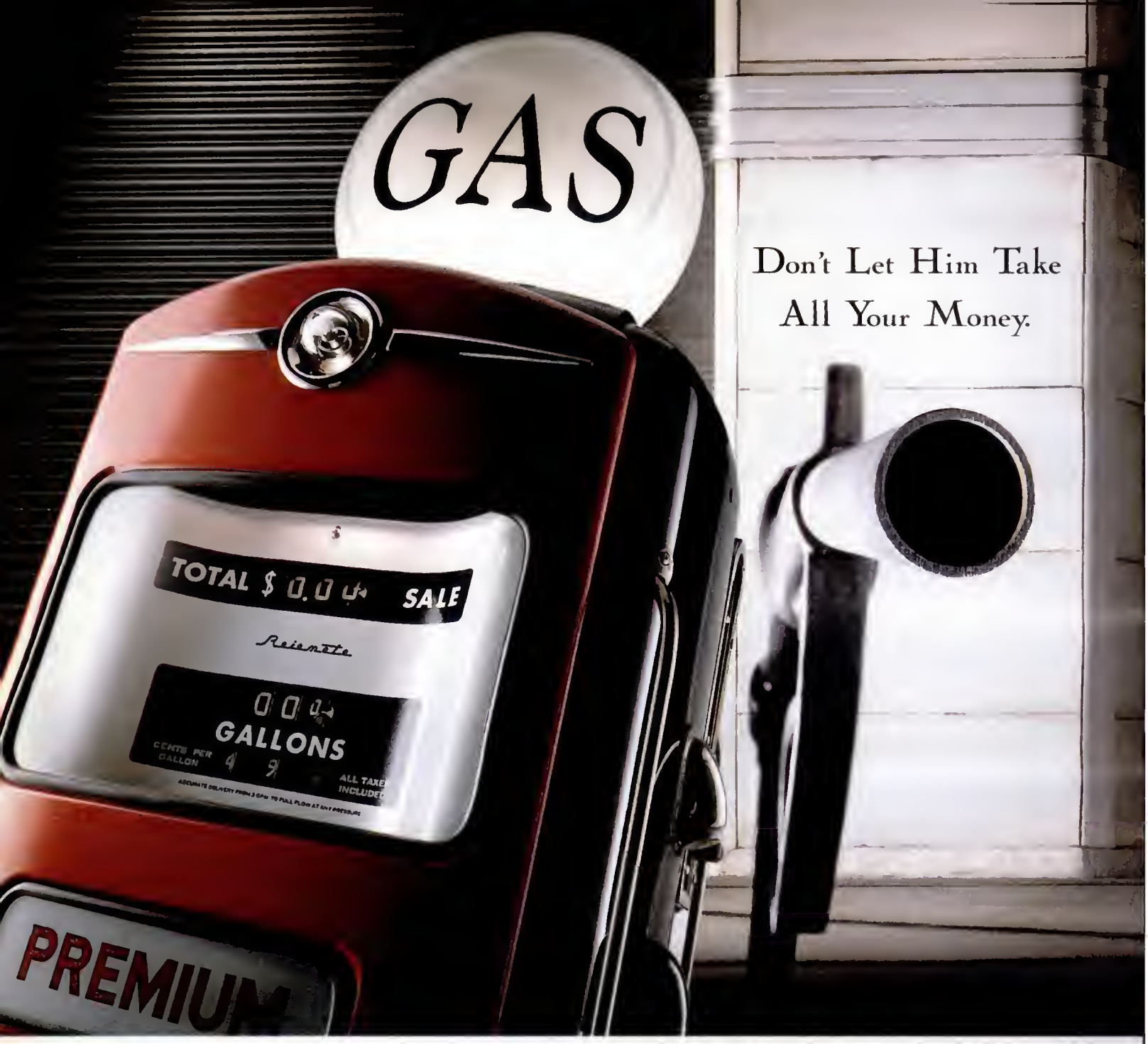

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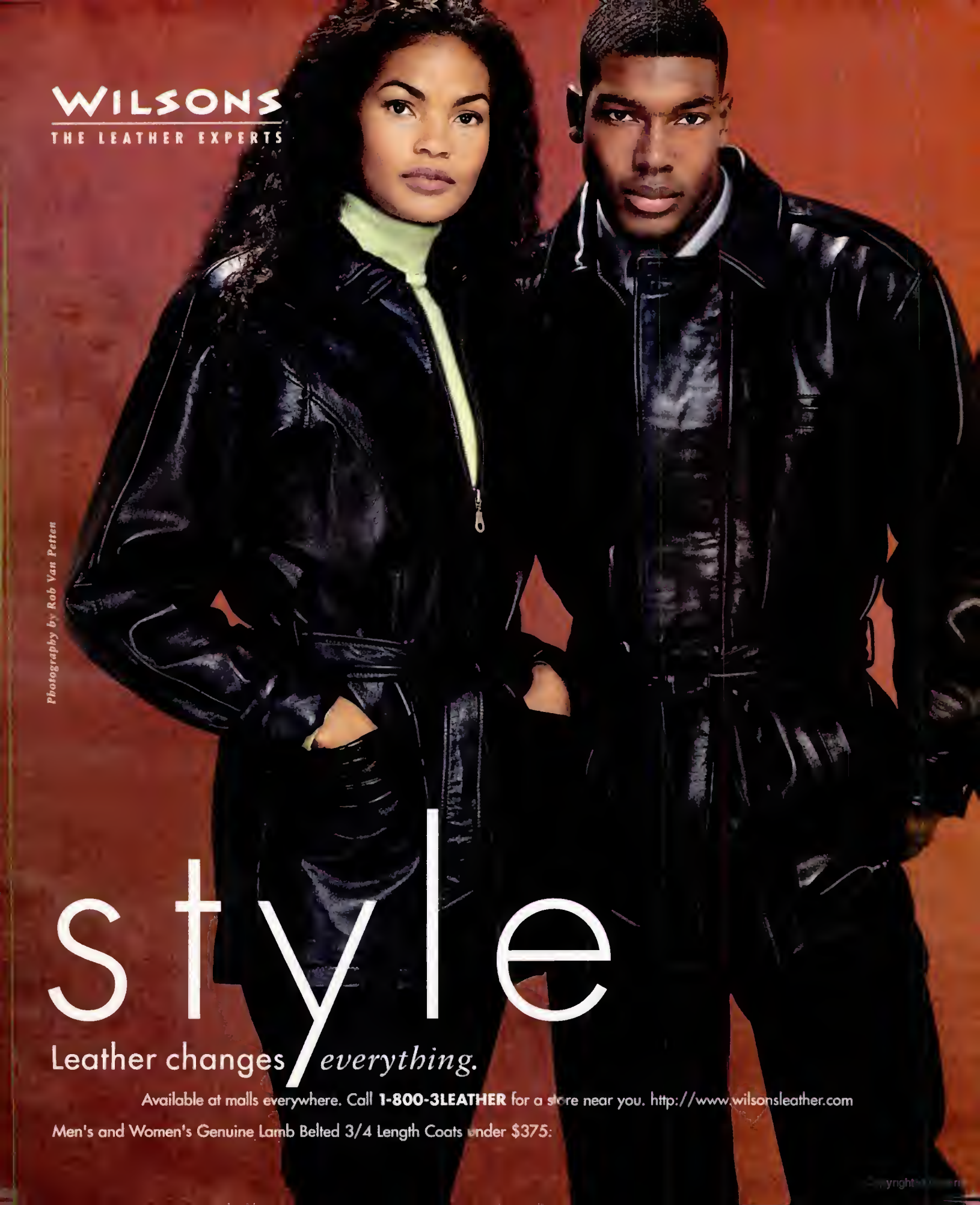
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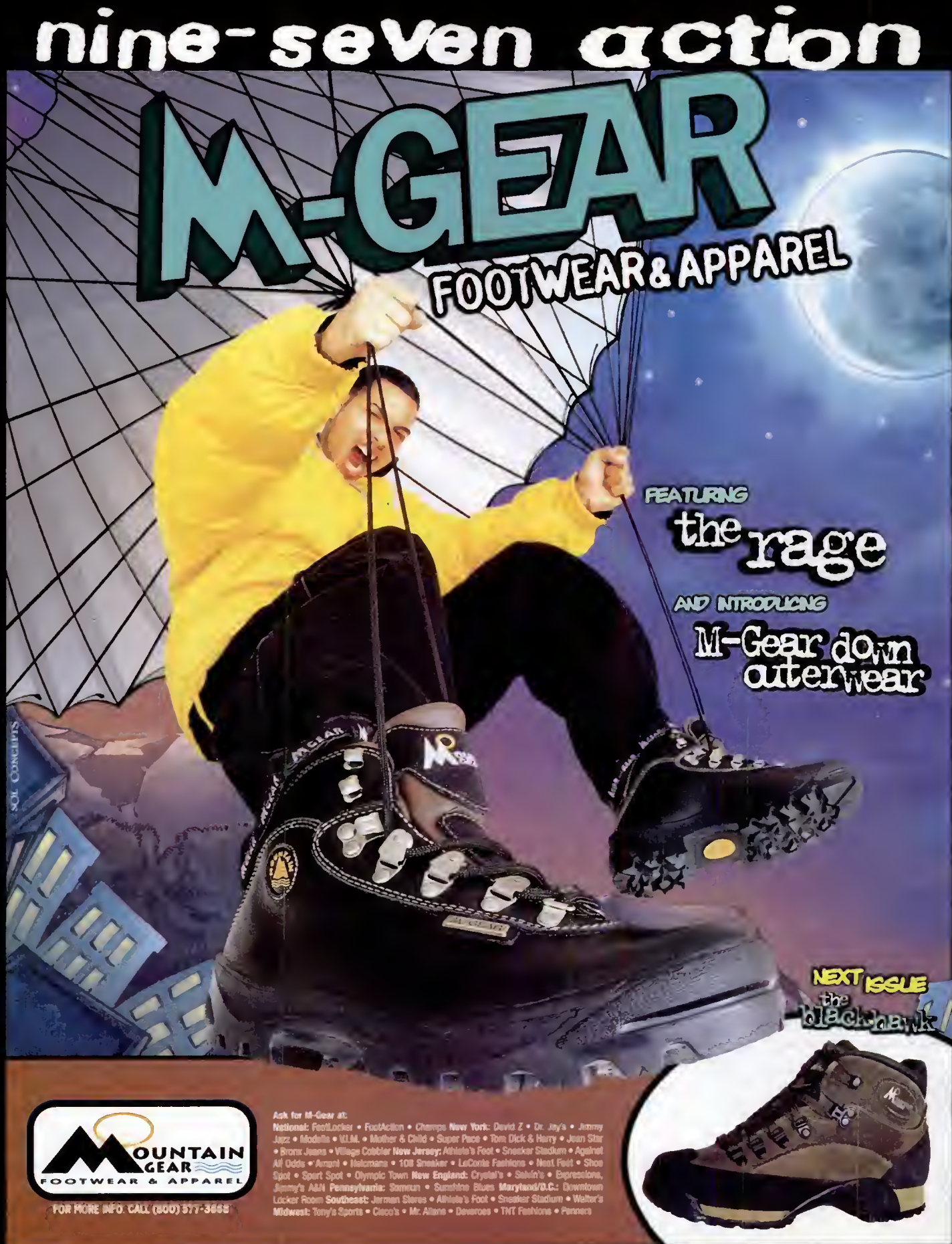
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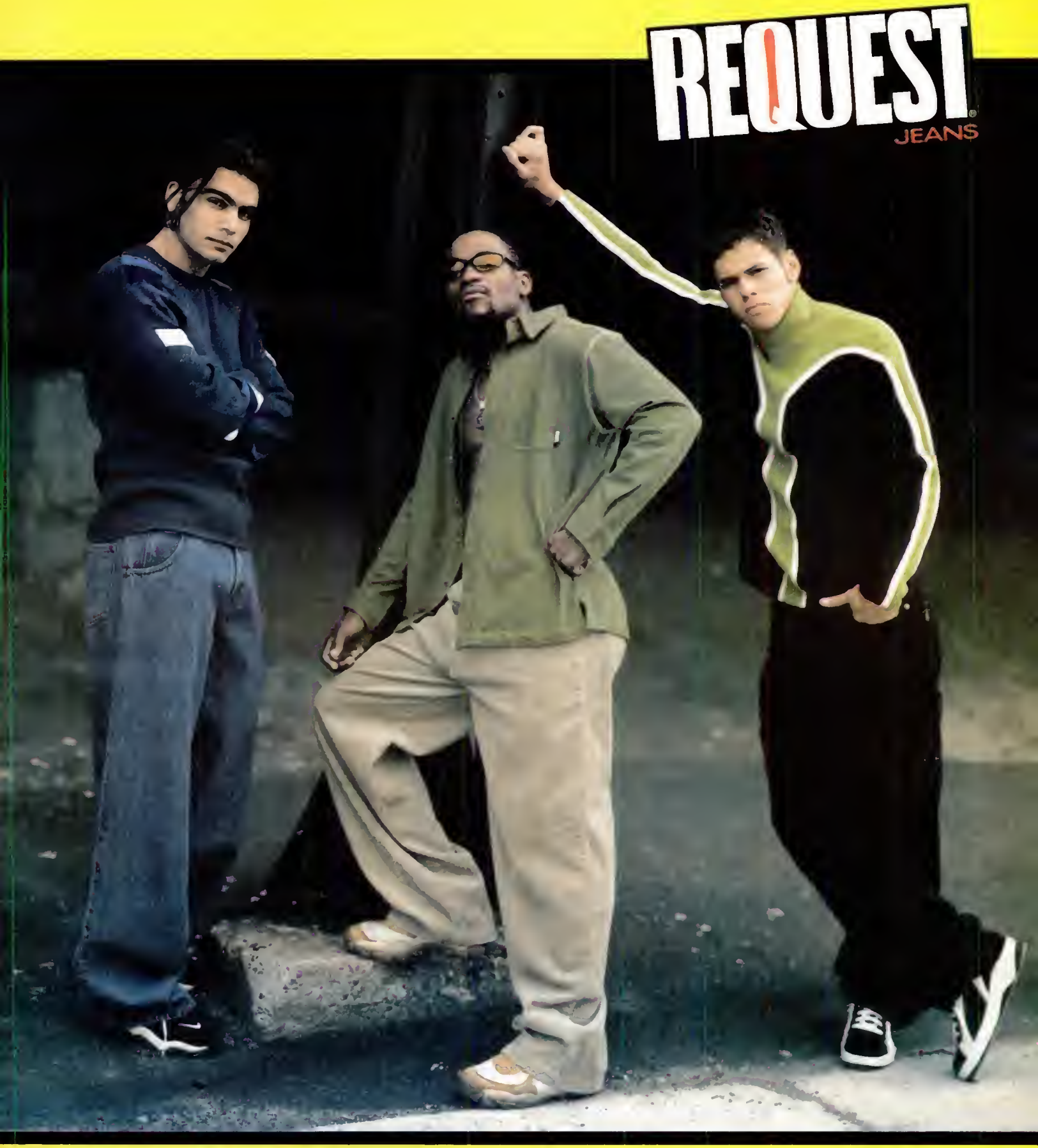
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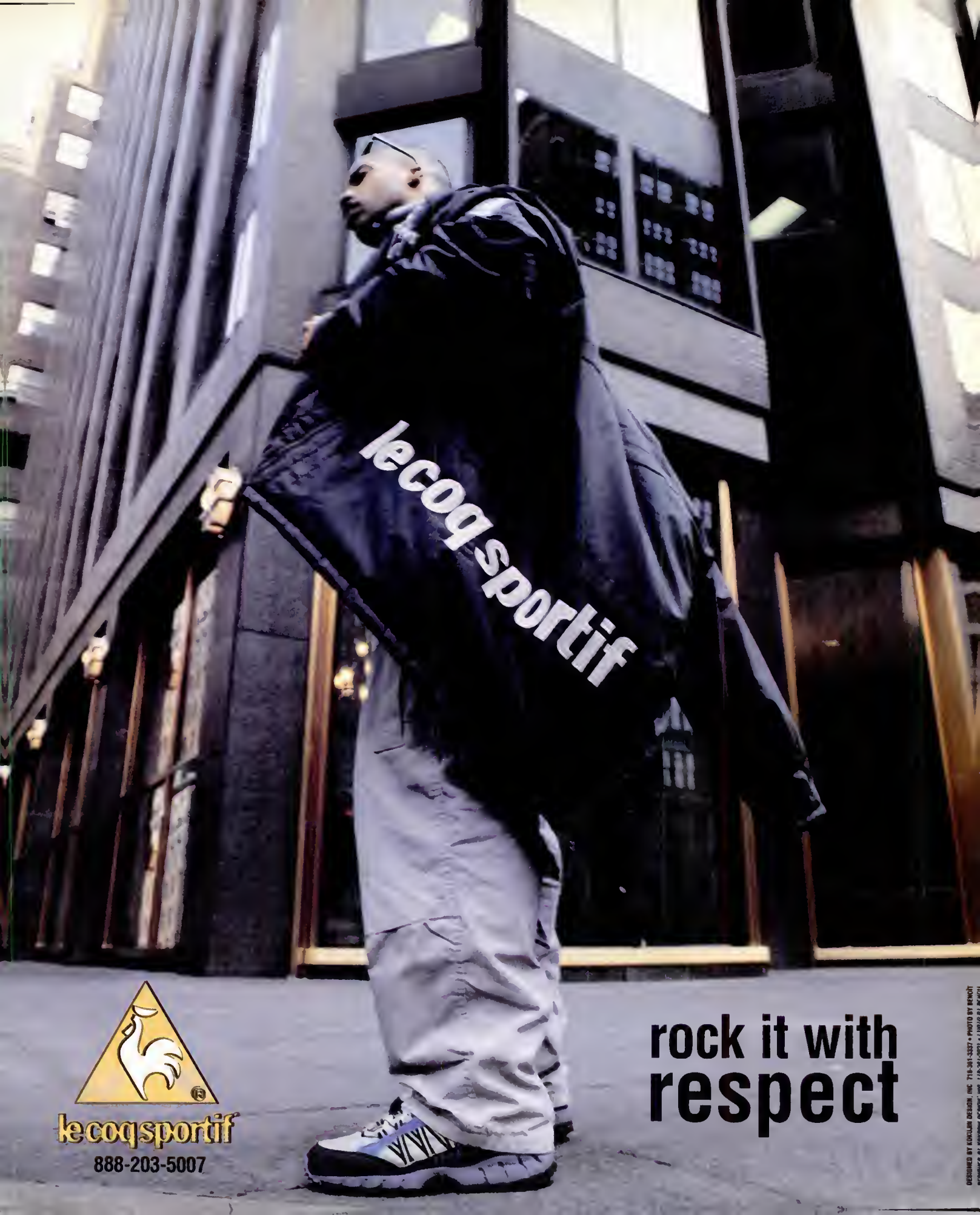
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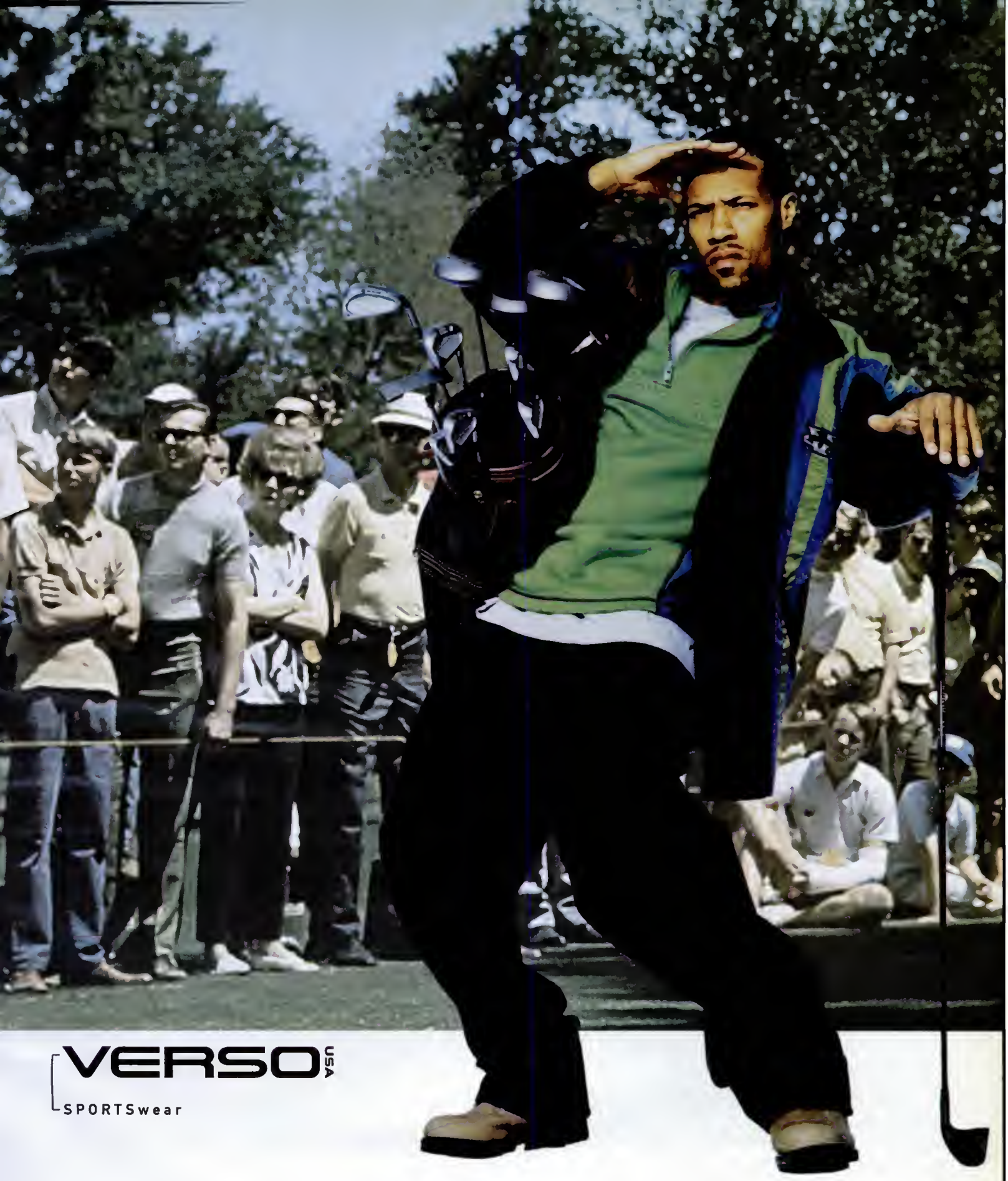

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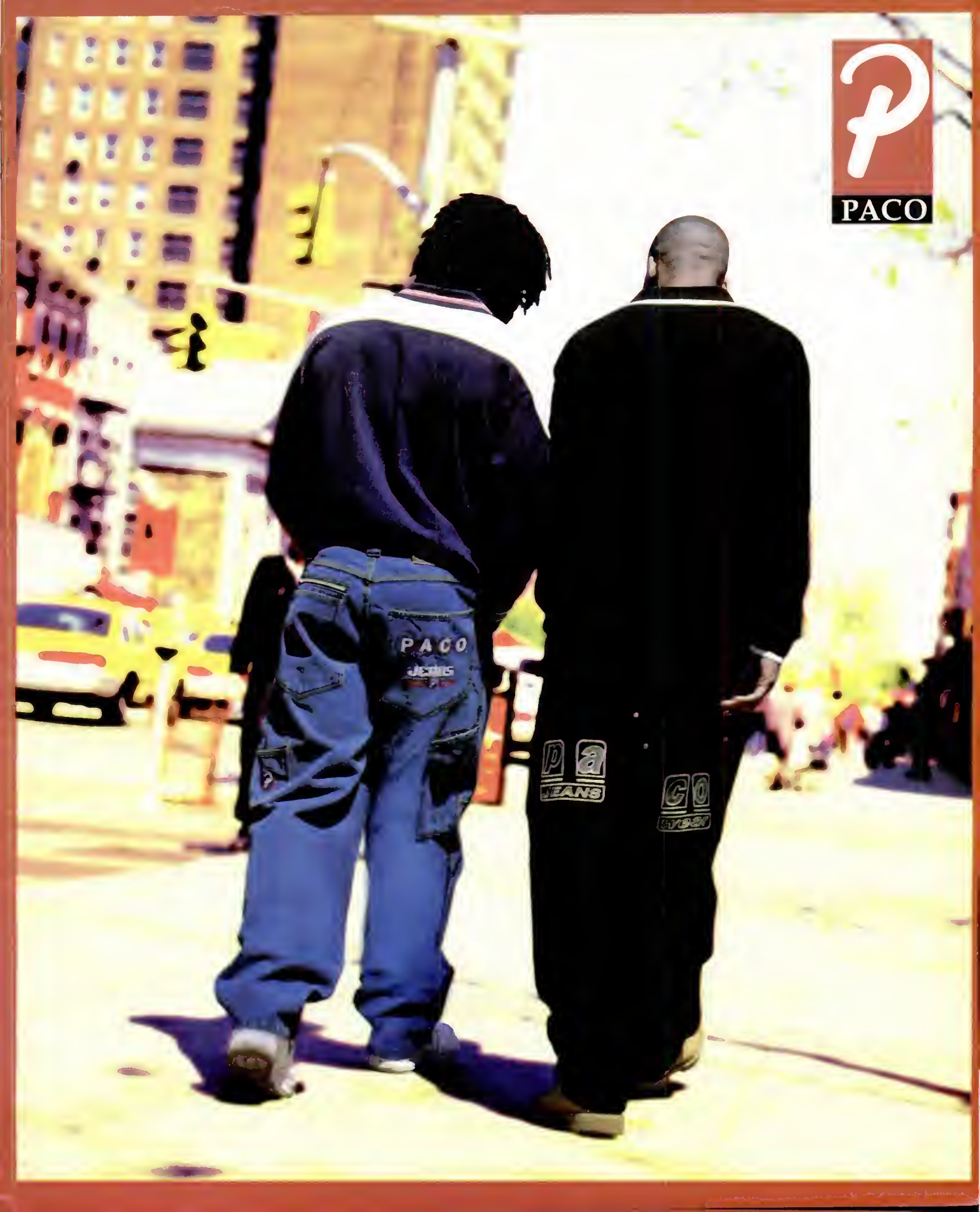
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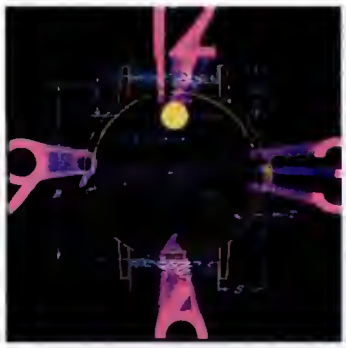

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Music is a reflection of the heart, soul, and mind that is constantly in motion. Similarly, popular culture exists in a state of perpetual movement and evolution. As each travels on its respective course, they collide and intertwine at thousands of different points along the way. And every single point of intersection between the music we love and the culture we celebrate creates an indescribable energy—one that rings with promise and vibrates with excitement. That collective dynamism manifests itself as the force we know as VIBE.

Understanding VIBE as a force, as the final frontier of musical and cultural exploration, raises this question: Who determines how urban music and street culture move, where they go, and at what rate of speed? The answer is clear: You do.

Like no other audience in history, you, the readers of this magazine, have repeatedly demonstrated your ability to convey Juice. Ultimately, *you* have the Juice. Everyone in the game wants it, but you have the most say in who gets it.

Juice is what fuels this engine. Juice is what fuels this issue. Juice is the lifeblood that flows through VIBE's circulatory system. It's more fluid than liquid, definitely not gas, yet solid as a rock.

•The enterprising genius of the Wu-Tang Clan—*C.R.E.A.M.-y Juice.*

•The antidotal effect Erykah Badu and Maxwell have had on R&B this year—*Restorative Juice.*

•Bad Boy's musical tributes to the late Notorious B.I.G., which raised more than $2 million for the Wallace Family—*Responsible Juice.*

•Will Smith, child of hip hop, Fresh Prince of the free world—*Twenty-Million-Dollars-Per-Picture Juice.*

And as all this Juice continues to flow, we at VIBE will continue to work hard to serve you. Because VIBE is more than a magazine. Tucked away in a secret compartment behind his 27 Grammys is a master formula for Juice that was developed by our founder, Quincy Jones. That elixir has been so potent, we have been able to extend VIBE's force beyond the magazine—to seminars, the Internet, concerts, books.

To properly represent the potential of the artists that we cover, we constantly strive to shape, hone, and perfect the vision of VIBE. This month, we undertake our boldest expansion yet. We have extended the power of VIBE to your television with *VIBE*, a late-night entertainment talk show produced by Q and hosted by comedian Chris Spencer. Five nights a week, we will be bringing the flavor and spirit that you expect from VIBE to television screens all across the country.

At VIBE, we channel the Juice you generate back to you—first through the magazine and now through television. From your Juice, the VIBE force flows and grows. We will continue our mission—to create the greatest institution of music journalism in the world. Using this power—this energy—we will continue to take this music and this culture to dizzying heights, places yet to be seen. Places you can't even imagine.

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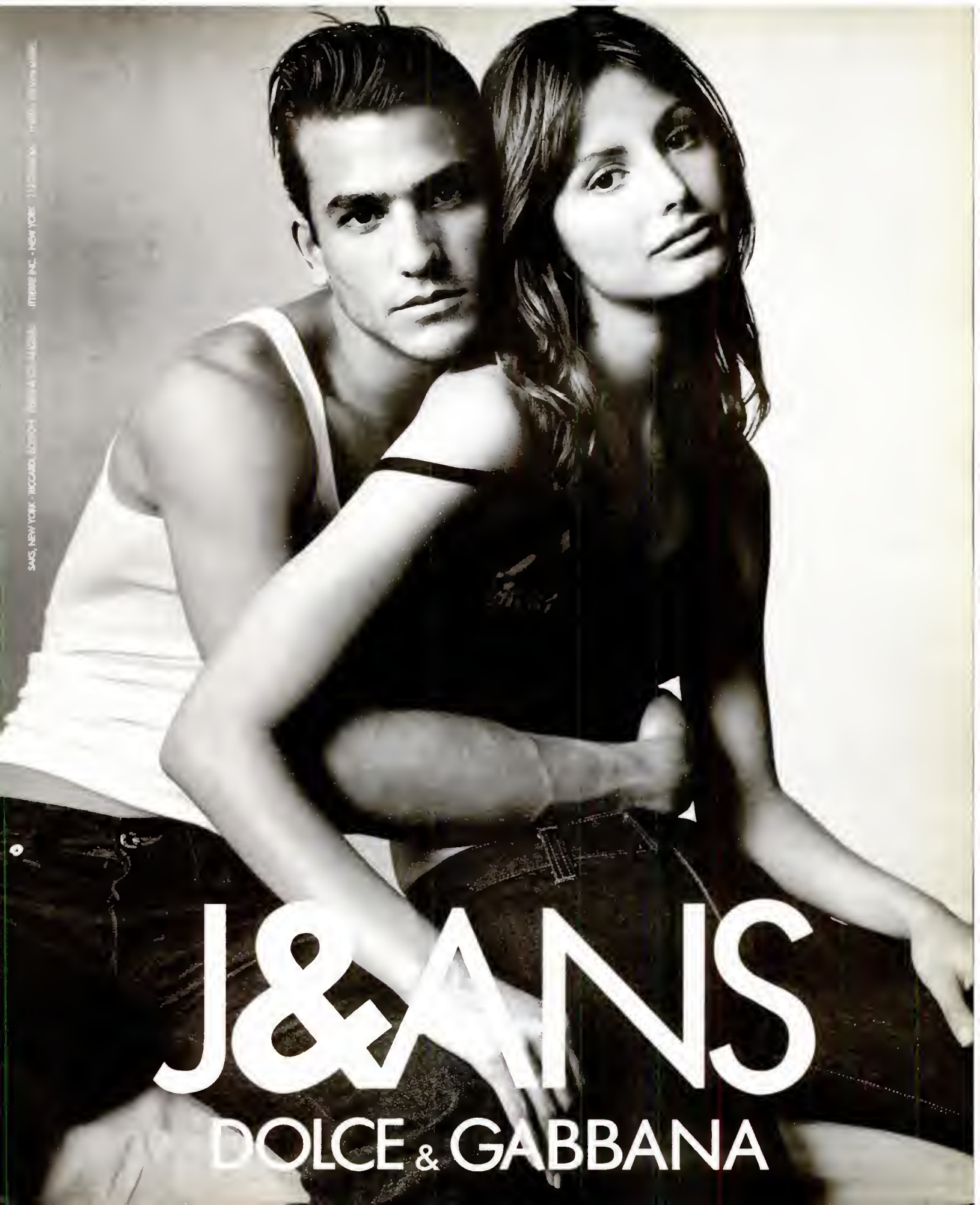
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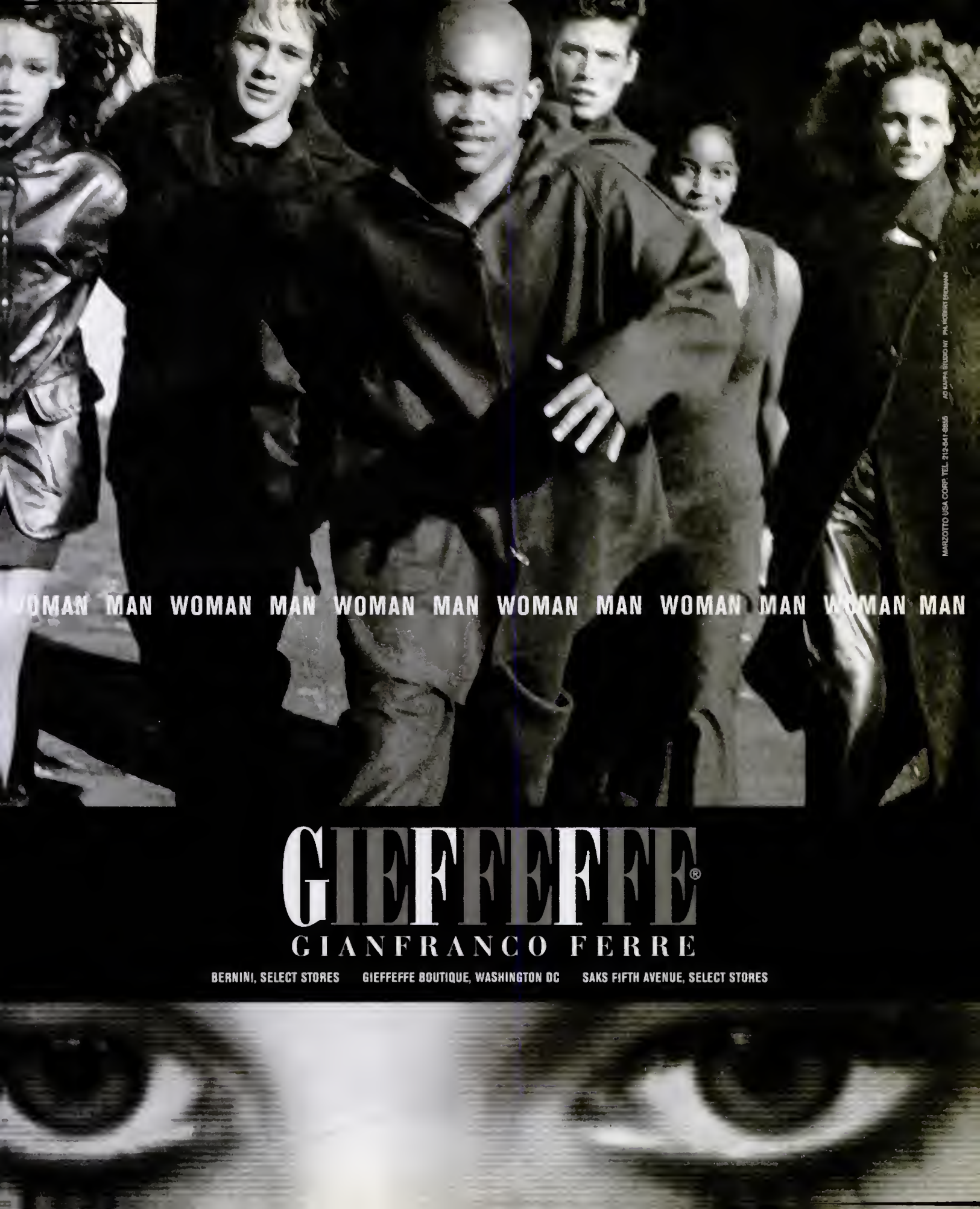
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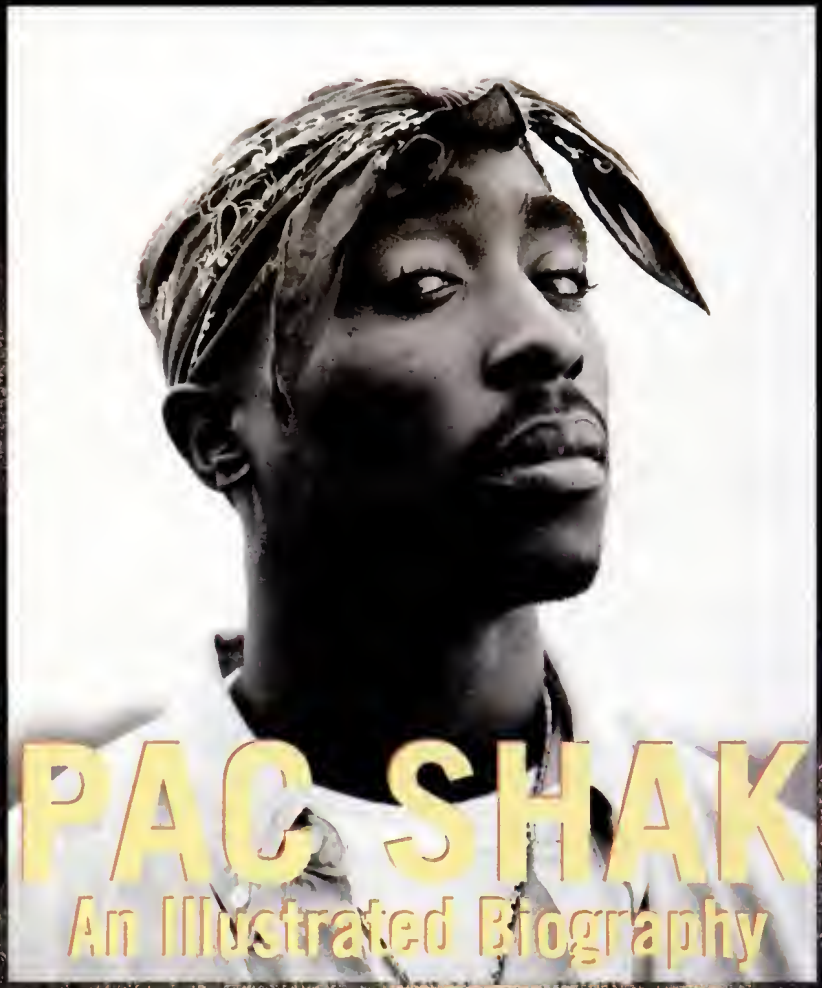
THE BOOK. THE LIFE. THE LAST WORD.

Compiled by the editors of VIBE, this is the definitive biography of this generation's most controversial hip-hop artist, from his childhood as the son of a former Black Panther and his explosive arrival on the hip-hop scene, to his highly publicized rivalries and arrests and his violent death at age 25.

Photo Credit: Dana Lixenberg



TUPAC SHAKUR includes more than 125 full-color exclusive photographs from VIBE's archives, a foreword by Quincy Jones, an introduction by Danyel Smith, and a wealth of never-before-published material, including memorial tributes from John Singleton and Ernest Dickerson and the text from a complete on-line interview with Tupac.

TUPAC SHAKUR

An Illustrated Biography

By the Editors of VIBE Magazine

Foreword by Quincy Jones

May Tupac Shakur rest in peace, and may the rest of us live in it.

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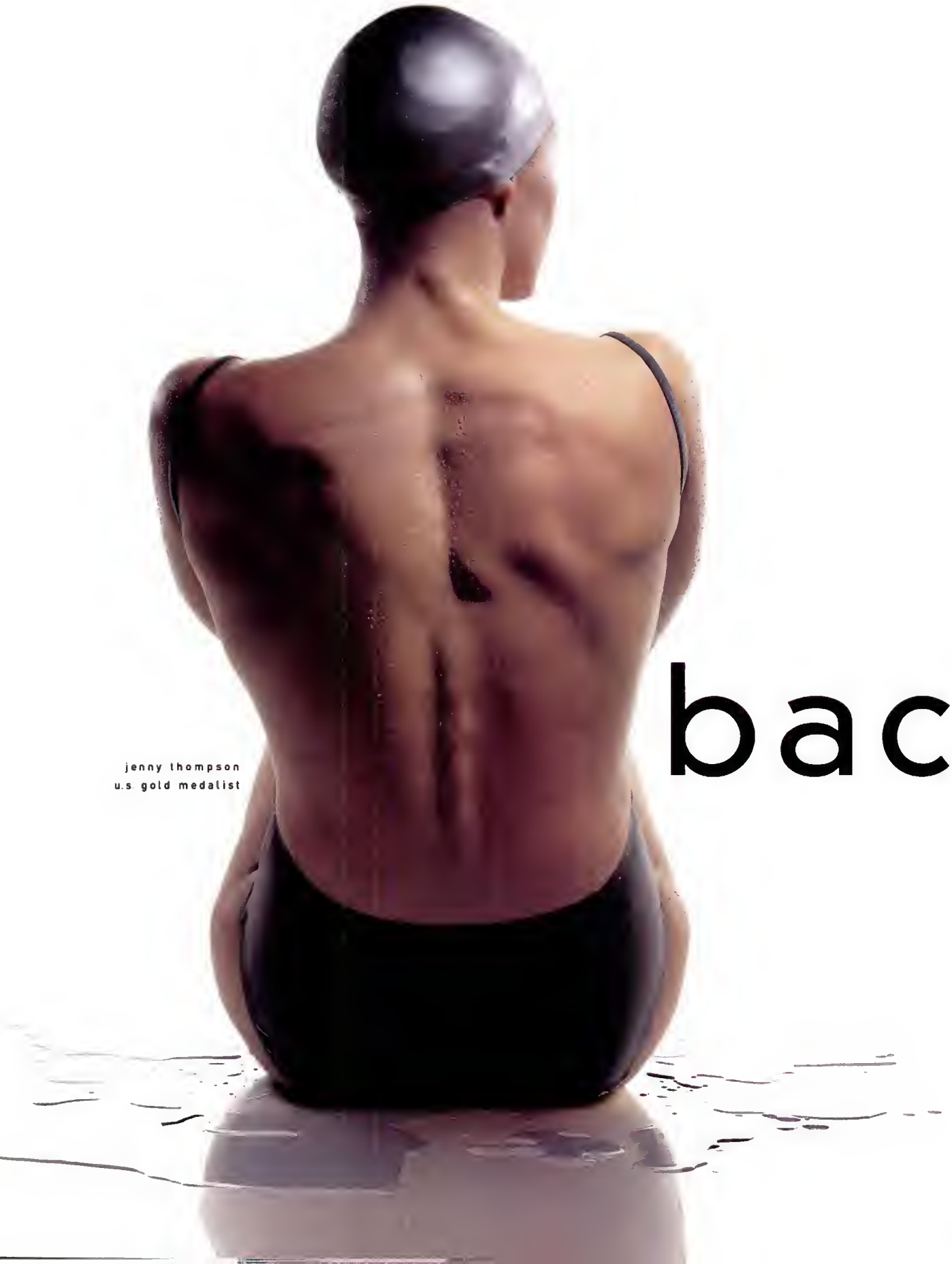

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jenny thompson
u.s. gold medalist

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"sole long"
with rubber
bottom

both work well
in water.

jennifer love hewitt
actress/"party of five"

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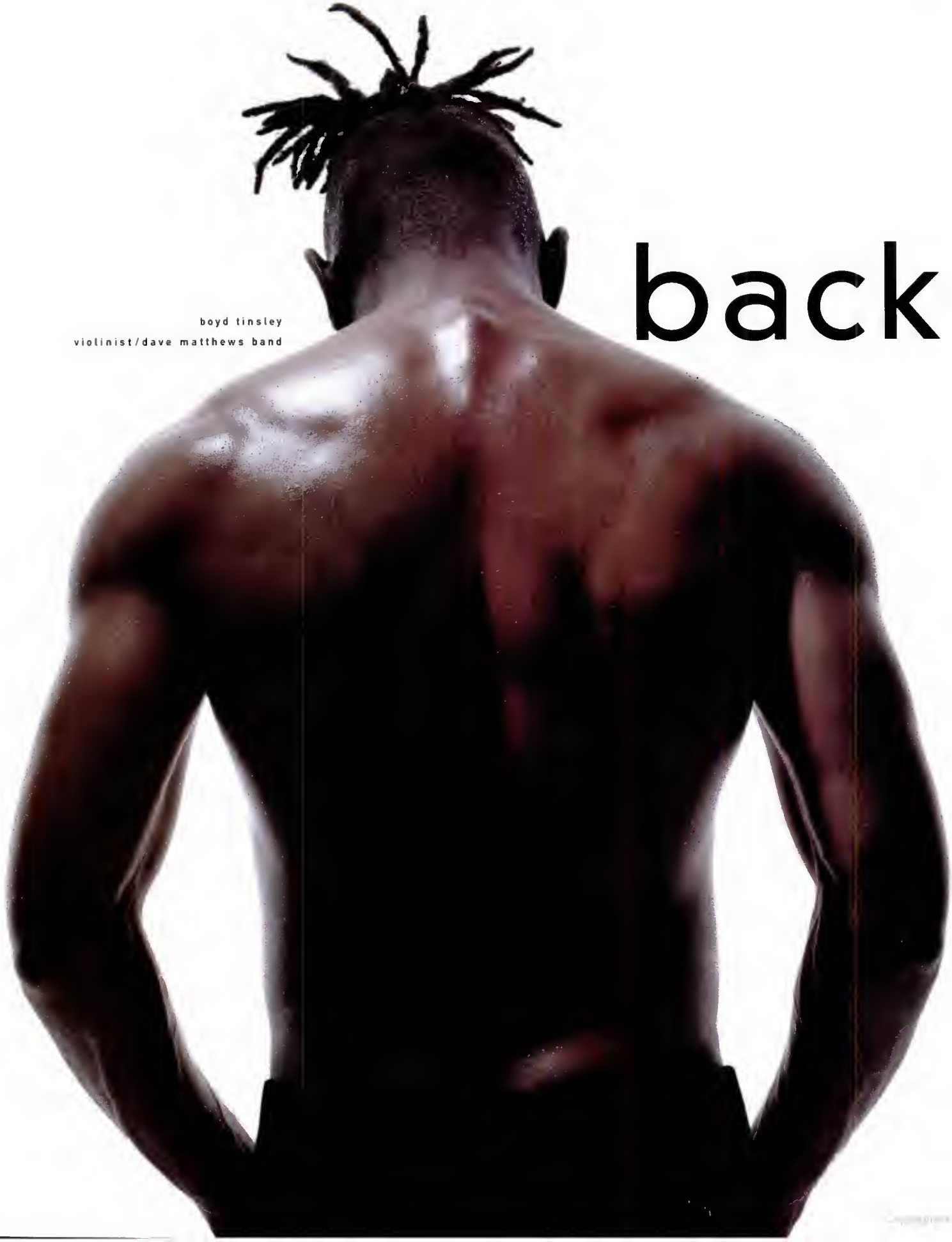
"daily transit"
with multiple
pockets

both popular items
at school.



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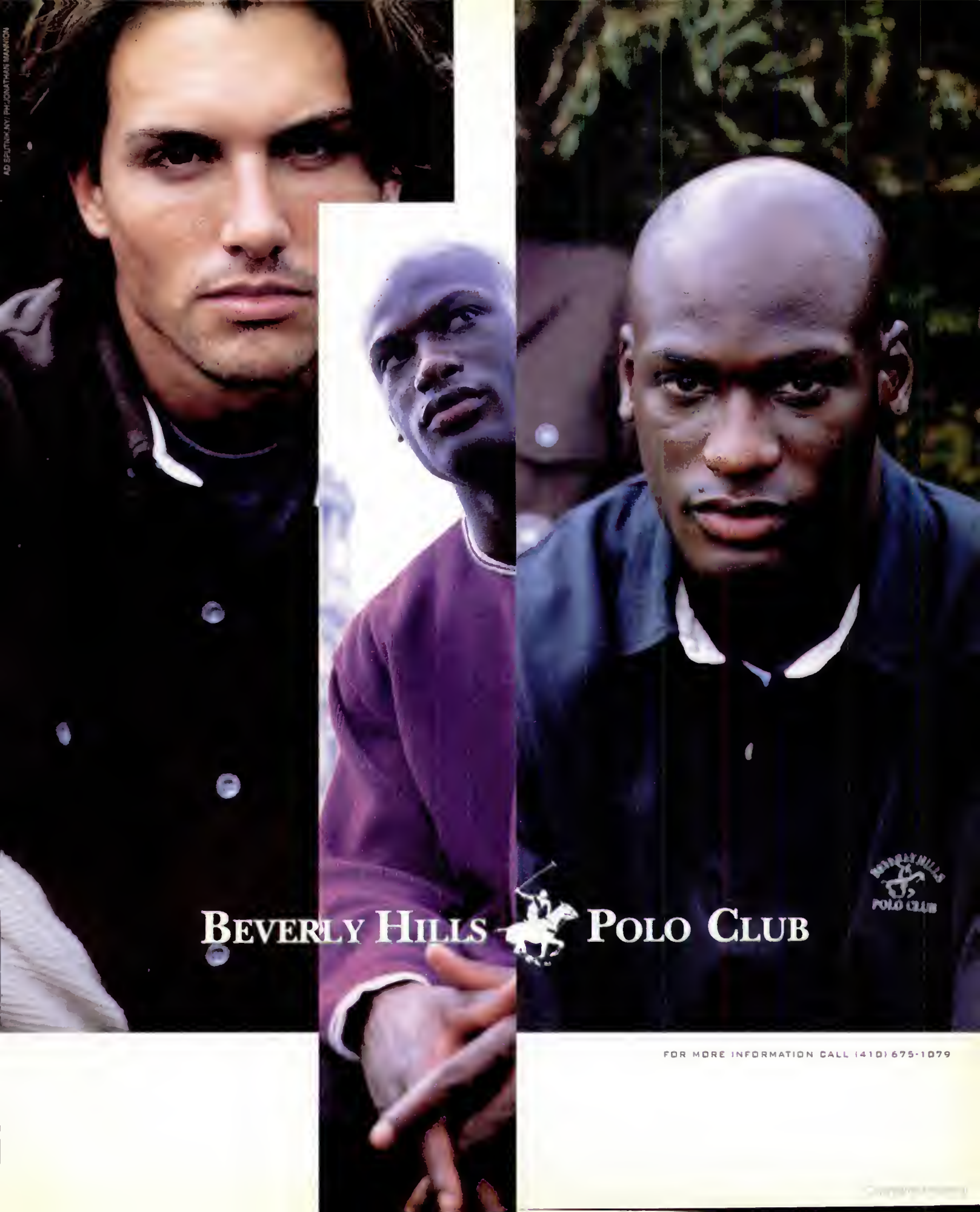
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VIBE assistant editor **Karen R. Good** conversed with rapstress Lil' Kim for "More Than a Lil' Bit" (page 174). "Kim's fire and promise let you know not to underestimate her," says Good. "You feel a need to protect her until she starts talking—and you realize she'd do a better job of protecting you." The Texas-born Good has written for *ego trip*, *The Village Voice*, *Seventeen*, *People*, and *The New York Times Magazine*.

It was a reunion for the Wu-Tang Clan and **Daniel Hastings** when they hooked up at the Wu mansion for "Right and Exact" (page 114). "It's been five years since I shot Wu-Tang's first album cover, and it's great to see all they've accomplished since then," says Hastings, 28. In addition to providing the photographs for *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*, he has shot album covers for Jodeci, Raekwon, and Keith Murray, as well as directed Jeru the Damaja's video "You Can't Stop the Prophet."

Harry Allen sat with Oprah Winfrey for two hours in her Chicago office for "Owned By Nobody" (page 120). "I loved Oprah from the moment she took my microphone, put it up her blouse, and pinned it to her collar," says Allen. "She's a rich woman and equally rich in spirit." Allen, a native New Yorker, is celebrating 10 years as a hip hop activist and, in the words of Public Enemy's Chuck D, as a "media assassin." He recently joined the advisory boards of Indiana University's Archives of African American Music and Cultures and Fisk University's Race Relations Institute.

Jayson Keeling got schooled when he photographed Harvard's Afro-American Studies department for "The Minds of Black Folk" (page 170). "I was intimidated when I heard who I'd be working with," confesses Keeling. "But they were very receptive and lots of fun to work with. It was easy to capture their depth and intelligence on film." Born in Brooklyn and raised in Jamaica, Canada, and the Bronx, Keeling has photographed for *Rolling Stone*, *YSB*, and *aRude*.

VIBE's national affairs editor, **Farai Chideya**, met Louis Farrakhan in his Chicago home for "The Charmer" (page 132). "Many have this preconceived notion of him—either saint or sinner," she says. "I wanted to get into his mind and let everyone form their own opinions." Chideya, who covered the 1996 presidential election for CNN and is a former *Newsweek* reporter, now reports for ABC News and contributes to *Time*.

Chiedo Nkwocha, VIBE's copy editor and a London native, gives us a lesson in "Modern English" (page 160). He also wrote this month's Tech page Q&A on Industrial Light + Magic....Photographer Tajima took us into a dreamscape for "Future Shock" (page 190). He has also contributed to *Surface*....Makeup artist **Nzingha**, who beautified Lil' Kim for "More Than a Lil' Bit," has also given face to Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige, Quincy Jones, Babyface, and Dick Clark....**Craigh Barboza** talked money with comic Chris Tucker for "Movin' On Up" (page 215). He has written for the *New York Times*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Premiere*....**Howard Schatz** was on familiar territory when he photographed seven hot young dancers for "We Believe They Can Fly" (page 182). His work is collected in *Passion and Line: Photographs of Dancers* (Graphis, fall '97)....**William Mills II** caddies for Tiger Woods in "Our Shorty" (page 126). He's also interviewed Amiri Baraka and Gwendolyn Brooks.... **Eugene Holley Jr.** discusses the significance of Bryant Gumbel in "Television Prince" (page 172). He's contributed to *The Village Voice*, *Jazz Times*, and *Down Beat*....**Tiziano Magni**, who's the eye behind the Calvin Klein underwear campaign featuring Kate Moss and Michael Bergin, cruised the streets of Harlem to shoot "Uptown" (page 199).

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SECRETS REVEALED

Toni Braxton know she need to stop! Some people tone up a little bit, take off a couple of pounds, and totally lose it! Granted, the sista looks good; but every time I see her, she's wearing less and less. In the June/July issue ["Toni's Secret," by Michael A. Gonzales], she's just gone too far. Put your clothes back on, and put the focus back onto what really matters—your voice. Less ain't always more, girlfriend; leave a little to the imagination, because you're better than that. Breasts will sag over time, but real skillz last forever.

Vonetta Booker
Stamford, CT

I take offense with anyone who contributes to the stereotype that black females must use their bodies to get ahead in life. It is disheartening to see someone you thought had gained success by using their talent stoop to the level of Madonna to further their career. Getting plastic surgery has really gone to her head. Toni's voice is what true fans appreciate, not her surgically bought looks.

Felice Baptiste
Bronx, NY

In an era when so many artists believe they must rely upon sex to sell their music, it's refreshing to see it done the other way around. Toni Braxton has actually used her voice to sell her sex appeal. The article, cover, and accompanying photos were simply superb. Thank you VIBE, and thank you Ms. Braxton!

Tony Hayes
Camden, NJ

I've always thought of Toni Braxton as a symbol of class and style—a true representation of how black women should carry themselves. I understand she is trying to explore different styles, but this is going too far! Don't misunderstand me, because I love beautiful women as much as the next guy; but a woman going to these great lengths to gain attention is trying to compensate for lack of brains and personality.

Steve Flemming
Hampton, VA

I know that this magazine is doing what sells—and sex sells. But keep in mind that our society has a disturbingly sexually active teenage community: Eight-year-old children are having sex in schools, and young people are living with and dying from AIDS. When will it all end? It will not and cannot with covers like this.

Kimberly Reynolds
Washington, D.C.

As a parent of an avid reader of your magazine, I find it revolting and unnecessary for a naked woman to be displayed on the cover. I was offended that my son was exposed to pornography in a magazine that claims to focus on music. VIBE should spend more time attempting to sell the magazine with its content rather than using shock value.

Jiann R. Phillips
Irving, TX

Once again, your magazine managed to produce a magnificent cover. Your article on Toni Braxton was in-depth, detailed, and straight to the point. This vamp has femininity, class, knows who she is and what she wants, and, most of all, shows and remembers her morals and roots with the Lord. That's a big turn-on.

Marcus Estor
Flint, MI

"Your issue featuring Toni Braxton should have been reserved for *Playboy* magazine. The 'freakiest' brother on lock-down here was in shock."

If Toni Braxton says she doesn't want to disclose the details of the time she lost her virginity for fear "my father might be reading this," what the hell does she think he (and everybody else who can see) is going to think when he sees her on this cover? Hel-lo-o?

Oneita
Washington, D.C.

Toni's secrets? What secrets? Everything is out in the open. Her father could be illiterate and still go into shock.

Phyllis N. Davis
Oakland, CA

As a female, I do not want to see Toni's "ta-tas" through a translucent shirt. As for the article, I do not understand why she wants to stay celibate until marriage when she's posing naked on the cover. It's one thing to dress provocatively; but to be on a magazine cover with just a towel is unnecessary.

Cheryl Talley
Bronx, NY

Four stars on the Toni Braxton article. White women can be revealing and it's okay; but when a sista does it, she's a tramp. Sistas will even put down another sista because they've fallen into the stereotype where they think it's better for a white person to look that way than it is for a sista. And the thought of her being a lesbian never crossed my mind, though she does make a number of female heads turn. As a lesbian, I can say that we are not always looking to recruit others for our lifestyle. Toni, you keep doing what you like, your look is tasteful!

Creme de la Creme
Yonkers, NY

I think Toni Braxton's whole style is banging. The story definitely shows she's real; not who we think she should be, but who she wants to be. I applaud her and agree that she has the body and every right to show it. We already know there is talent there, and she doesn't have to show skin to sell records; so it's obvious she did it because she felt like it. More people should live their lives for themselves and not care about what people think of them.

A. Johnson
Bronx, NY

I know that I'm definitely in the minority when I say I'm tired of seeing Toni Braxton's scraggly weave, heavy-gray makeup, and bare ass every

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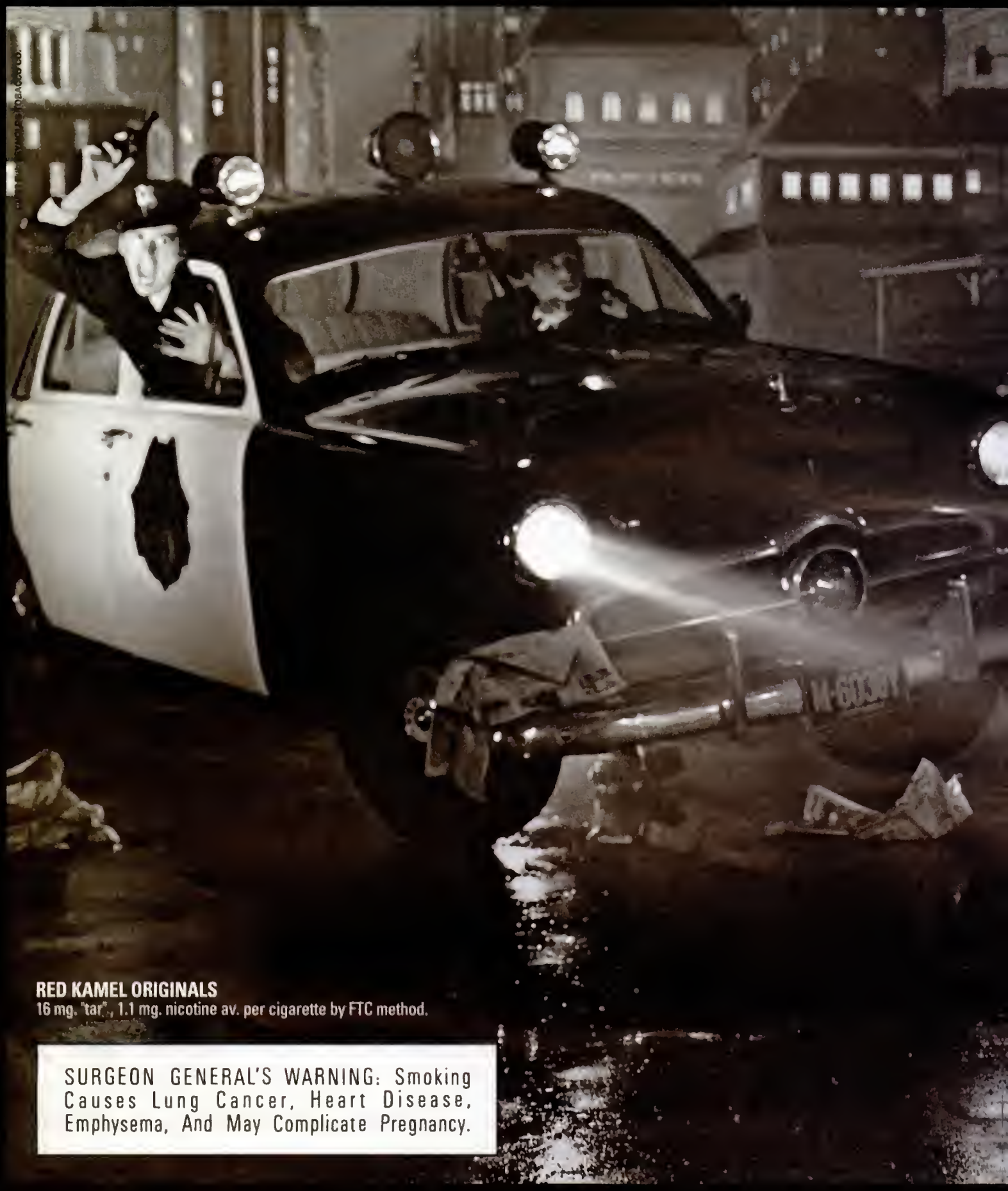
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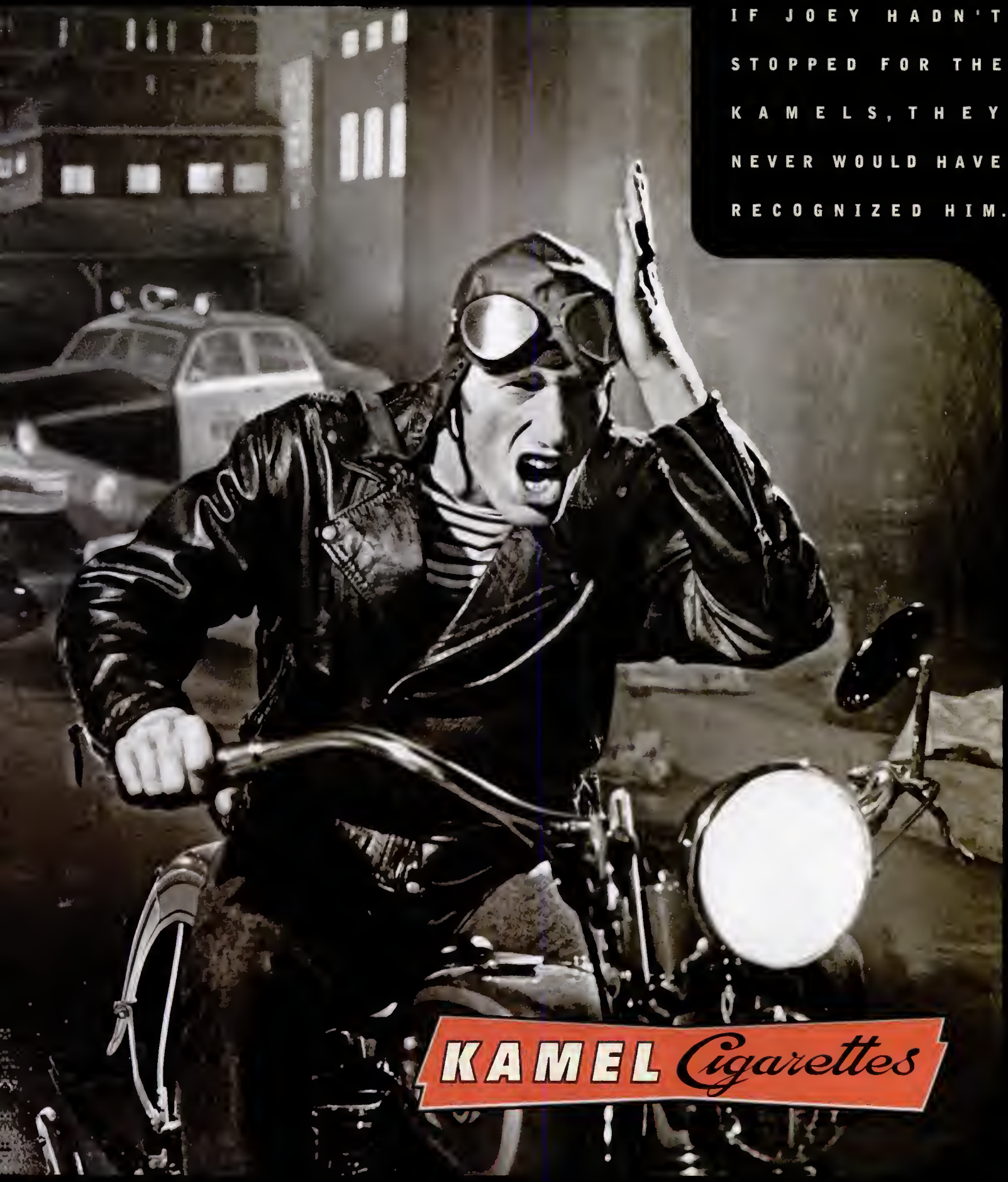

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"In The Middle"
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159 NUYORICAN SOUL
"I Am The Black Gold Of The Sun"
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JUNE/JULY COCA-COLA "SOUL BOWL" RESULTS:
Kenny Lattimore made it into the playoffs by winning the division with his jam "For You" which scored 39.5% of the listener's votes. However, the game was close with the Goodfellaz single "If You Walk Away" winning second place, Nuyorican Soul coming in next with their song "Runaway" and Rahsaan Patterson followed closely with his jam "Come Over".

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time I pick up a magazine or tune into an awards show. I can't believe you could even form the words "shy" and "classy" in reference to Miss Braxton. What a walking contradiction! Toni Braxton–sexy? Everything about her is contrived and a bit old. I'd like to know what her parents think of her now.

C.W.B.
Tulsa, OK

Toni is a very talented woman; but instead of letting her talent shine, she constantly lets herself be overshadowed by her recent photos and the like. With sisters like this "exercising" their freedom of expression, I'm afraid our little girls will grow up thinking this is acceptable and normal behavior.

M. Gabrielle Wood
Baltimore, MD

Your interview with Toni Braxton was extremely insightful. Wearing revealing clothes is not whorish, no matter what color you are, as long as you do it with style and self-respect. Her stunning beauty, along with the way she carries herself, allows her to pull it off with dignity.

Tony J. Backer
Bremerton, WA

I was truly disgusted with Toni's decision to "go there." I think we're dealing with a confused, undercover freak who tries to cover up her sleazy side with a wannabe classy sensuality. Whenever Toni speaks, it sounds inconsistent with her actions and unbelievably phony. Prefabricated is what her image is. Our intelligence continues to be insulted by this woman.

D. Malone
New York, NY

In the tradition of Madonna, Lil' Kim, and Foxy Brown, Toni Braxton has lowered her standards and revealed herself as a woman with no class, style, or self-respect. Do us all a favor, girlfriend, and put your clothes back on. There are some secrets you need to keep to yourself.

K.M. Adams
Washington, D.C.

Your issue featuring Toni Braxton should have been reserved for *Playboy* magazine. What was the difference? The "freakiest" brother on lockdown here was in shock. Our favorite preacher's daughter couldn't have went out like that. It seems as if she is the one who can't keep those treasured "secrets," and now that they're revealed, guess what? The thrill is gone.

A. A.-R.
Camp Osibway
Marenisco, MI

Regarding the June/July issue of VIBE: The aforementioned publication was addressed to an inmate confined in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The enclosed publication contains sexually explicit information or material or features nudity and is being returned to you in accordance with P.L. 104–208, effective October 1, 1996.

Warden B.A. Lathers
Federal Prison Camp
Montgomery, AL

I was ecstatic to see a beautiful black woman proudly exposing her prized possessions on the cover. We need to see blacks who are proud of their bodies and not bundling up in big clothes being ashamed of themselves. We have fabulous bodies.

Kevin Bernard Johnson
New York, NY

Since you've already hooked up the fellas with the June/July cover, I think it's time you hook up the ladies with a little sumpthin' sumpthin'. Check it out: Method Man naked on the cover with just a mike to cover himself–and maybe throw in Redman for a little sumpthin' extra!

Kishawn Marie
Kansas City, MO

In the words of L.L. Cool J, "I took the cover right home to the bathroom!!!"

Warren G.
New York, NY

I, LATINA

I applaud Jennifer Lopez's talent and enjoyed Mimi Valdés's article ["Butter Pecan Rican," June/July]. However, the article failed to state clearly why Ms. Lopez is more in demand by white media as a Latina actress than–as you mentioned–Rosie Perez and Lauren Vélez. The answer is racism. Ms. Lopez, who is Puerto Rican, is considered to have more Caucasian features than the African features and skin color that grace Ms. Perez and Ms. Vélez, who are both also Puerto Rican. More important, in this society, black people, regardless of their nationalities or language, are constantly being oppressed. Hollywood is no different than Wall Street in this regard.

Theo Perry
New York, NY

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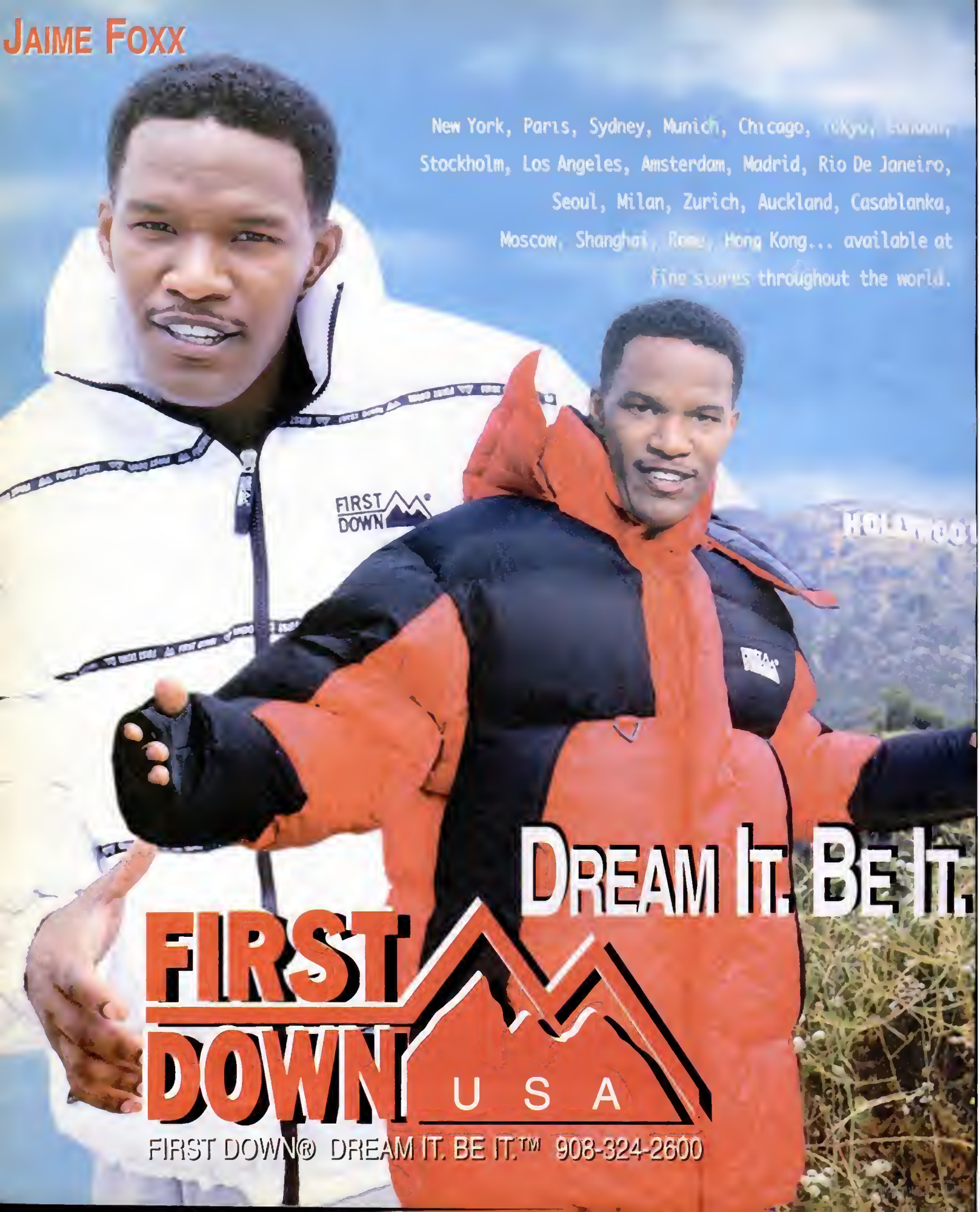
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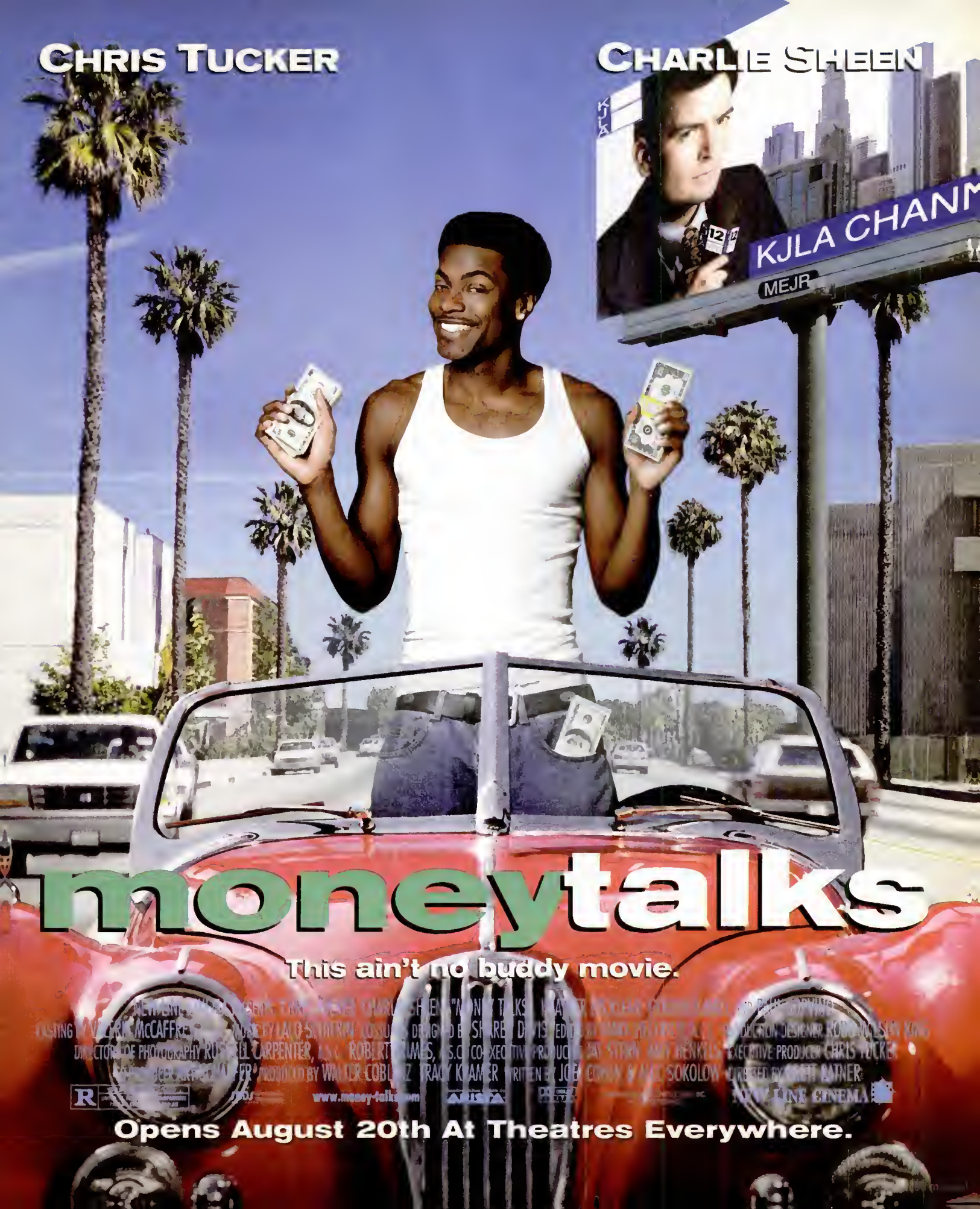
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I GOT WAXED

I wanna give it up to Gabriel Alvarez for his review of the new KRS-One album, *I Got Next* [Revolutions, June/July]. It's about time journalists get off KRS's balls and speak the truth. As important as he was (and somewhat still is) to hip hop, I am getting sick of his contradictory, holier-than-thou behavior. KRS fell off a long time ago; when can we realize this? KRS, drop the "I am hip hop." Next time, think before you talk.

B.G.
Detroit, MI

HEARTTHROB, NEVER

The article on the B.I.G. was the $h!# ["Brooklyn's Finest," by Minya Oh, June/July]. There is a phrase that describes me and him to a tee: "I may be a big black ugly dude, but I got style." B.I.G. was uplifting to all big men such as me. Rest in peace to the man who made the phrase "black and ugly as ever" famous.

Anthony Lee
Black and Ugly As Ever
New Orleans, LA

I used to be scared of women,
that's right, I won't lie.
But after listening to Big, I
thought I'd give hollering a try.
I went from a two-year relationship with my friend Rosie Palms
To getting licked head to toe,
remaining cool and calm.
I won't front like I get every
woman that I desire or want,
But I know that nature bumps are
something I do not flaunt.
You represented for every fat black
nigga in the world,
You let us know that shouldn't
hinder us from macking girls.
If it wasn't for that brotha, I'd
probably still be scared of women,
So as long as sex I'm giving, Biggie
you'll always be living!

Jeremy C. Davis
New Orleans, LA

P'S PROPS

I've been rockin' to Master P since his first LP, *The Ghetto's Tryin' to Kill Me*, and I would like to thank Tony Green ["Stairway to Heaven," June/July] for finally giving P the props he deserves. No Limit Records is the best in the business at putting out hardcore rap. Even though he hasn't had much radio support, P has not changed his style or image and has continued to put out the hardest "tru gangsta rap" there is.

Ka'Ron Johnson
Omaha, NE

GO SLOW

Being born and raised in Washington, D.C., I am very grateful to VIBE for including an article on the violence that is threatening D.C.'s go-go music scene ["Go-go, No Go," by Mensah Dean, June/July]. I think people across the country should be aware that rap is not the only form of music facing the possibility of being virtually banned from being performed live. To the fans of our music, whether it be hip hop, go-go, or whatever, we need to realize that it took society long enough to even consider this music a legitimate art form. Fighting and shooting don't prove anything; you're only falling deeper into a trap they already got set up for us.

Kishawn Rogers
Washington, D.C.

As the daughter of the Ibex club manager, Ron Green, I felt compelled to write this letter to express my thanks to VIBE for your article "Go-go, No Go." I know that violence comes with these crowds, and they are no different than those that now accompany rap audiences. However, go-go should be seen as a part of D.C.'s diverse history, not as a marker in D.C.'s chapter as the Murder Capital. Let it be known that I sympathize with the family of the police officer who was slain and agree that the blame definitely lies with the individual who performed the callous act.

A. Phillips
Chicago, IL

THE FIRE THIS TIME

It makes me furious to see people using another's life as a "campaign showcase to appear tough on crime" ["Killing Time," by Cheo Taylor Tyehimba, June/July]. And the fact that this is still going on between blacks and whites simply adds to the problem. When are we going to stop looking at the color of our skin or the place of our roots and simply look for justice and innocence? This is 1997, not 1897. Down the road I plan on being a successful lawyer. It is cases like this that make me more anxious for the job.

Asia P. Robinson
Montclair, NJ

I'm writing this letter in regard to your article "The Killing Time." I believe capital punishment is state-sanctified, premeditated murder. The use of the death penalty shows us that revenge is justified and honored in our society. It shows us a system that considers the death of another to be a victory. No matter how sanctified America tries to make the death penalty, two wrongs can never make a right.

Shawn Kimbrough
Indianapolis, IN

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STREET SMARTS

I'd like to congratulate Bönz Malone for writing such an inspirational and enlightening piece ["Tuph Street: Query Letter," June/July]. I too understand how challenging it can be to maintain a sense of spiritual balance and a positive attitude on a daily basis. It can be especially difficult for young adults like me who are at a key point of self-realization and acceptance in their lives. All I can say is, Never give up doing what's right and best for you, and God will never let you down.

N. Howard
Alexandria, VA

WHO DA MANSON?

I just happened to flip through your magazine and you had a little clipping about Marilyn Manson ["In the Mix," by Shani Saxon, June/July], my favorite band. Well, your statement about them working with Snoop Doggy Dogg was really rude. Even though I can't relate to Snoop's message, I think it's great that musicians from opposite ends of the spectrum are working together. I think they could really reach people, and both types of fans could be satisfied.

Gloria Mashayekhi
Houston, TX

PORN PART II

Congratulations on the May issue. I was glad to read the article on porn stars ["Sexy MFs," by Robert Morales, May]. It's rare that a magazine touches on such a subject. I agree that porn is more openly accepted in the black community. I've followed Vanessa, Angel Kelly, and Ebony Ayes for a long time. I'm glad you guys got the nuts to give these people a chance to express themselves. Big up to VIBE.

Damen Murray
Houston, TX

ME'SHELL, MY BELLE

The May issue was ruined by the article "Sexy MFs." Leave the porn stuff to the magazines that grovel in such trash. As for Me'Shell NdegéOcello ["Have No Fear," by Rebecca Walker, May], no way can one have the sexual orientation she has and still be a Muslim. Can VIBE go back to the basics that brought it into existence?

Ivan Cohen
Savannah, GA

The interview with master musician Me'Shell NdegéOcello offered insight into the constraints placed on sexuality labeled abnormal. Me'Shell detailed the interconnectedness of spirituality and sensuality. Spirit is the essence of self; sensuality is the expression of that self. All praises are due to Me'Shell for bravely bearing her soul and enlightening the people. I challenge the masses to be equally brave and to fight against fear, ignorance, and hatred. Have no fear!

Noni Ali Shabazz
Philadelphia, PA

TALKING DIRTY

I must commend you on the article titled "Let's Talk About Sex" [by Karen Good and Rob Marriott, May]. It was very realistic. People should be more open-minded when discussing these issues because sex affects our everyday lives. Even though the article was graphic at times, I can appreciate an interview of seven celebrities that honestly conveyed their sexual opinions. Your open discussion explored all aspects of sex from their first sexual encounter to gay and bisexual issues. Nothing was left unsaid.

Tiffany Shea Crittenden
Detroit, MI

As a sexuality educator, I found that you addressed some interesting and oft-ignored issues surrounding sexuality. However, I was quite surprised that you rarely touched on the plain facts—that HIV and STDs are running through the black community like wildfire, killing and maiming young people. Great job, you raised a lot of eyebrows; but next time, how about some solutions?

Christine King
Community Health Educator
Philadelphia, PA

FIGHT THE POWER

Let me commend you on your incredible article ["The War Next-Door," by Diana Reiss-Koncar, April] on the brutal conditions and tremendous struggle in Chiapas, Mexico. It's a real wake-up call to see what's going on down there. Performers like Rage Against the Machine and MC Guillermo try their best to let the public know what's happening in Mexico. The hip hop community and the youth of AmeriKKKa could truly learn a great deal from the Zapatistas' struggle. The day when we can put aside our petty bickering and fight the true enemy will be a great day.

Jon Bagot
Marlton, NJ

VIBE encourages mail and photographs from readers. Please send letters to VIBE MAIL, 215 Lexington Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10016. Or send E-mail to vibe@vibe. com. Send photos to VIBE YOUR BEST SHOT (same address). Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Photo submissions will become the property of VIBE and will not be returned.

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AP / WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

A Long Time Coming

"That's him, baby... that's that *devil*." Nodding his head and lifting his eyebrows over derk shedes, my father gestured toward the wiry, bespectacled man standing about 15 feet away on the west lawn of L.A.'s venereble First AME Church. Gray es eshes and hard as granite, the "devil" thet is Julius "Julio" Butler nerrowed his eyes et us end strolled ewey. "It doesn't metter how much time hes passed," Dad muttered through clenched teeth, "thet muthefucka's gonna *get his due*." Thet was two years ago.

Judgment Dey finally ceme. On June 10, when former Black Penther leeder Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, 49, strode out of jail and into an ocean of fist-weving supporters, heving been impnsoned for nearly 27 years, Julio Butler became publicly recognized es the liar and turncoat the Penthers knew him to be since the lete '60s. It was Butler's false testimony, fortified by efforts on behalf of the government's COINTELPRO plan to "neutralize" black activist groups, thet led to Prett's conviction—for murdering a young schoolteacher and wounding her husbend—in 1968. And justice wes e long time coming.

Almost 30 years later, a conservative Ronald Reegen eppointee, Superior Court Judge Everett Dickey, reversed that conviction, ruling that L.A. prosecutors withheld key evidence, including the fact thet Butler had acted as e down-low agent and informant for the police and FBI for three years before Pratt's murder trial. Butler's duty? To help disrupt, dismantle, and destroy the Black Panther Perty for Self-Defense.

Dickey's decision helped confirm what most in the activist community already knew: that Pratt's only crime was being a man of action and resolve. Pratt understood, as did the other Panthers end their freedom-fighting counterparts, thet a commitment to bleck liberetion sometimes comes et e high price. Some paid with their lives; others with their ways of life. You could sey that Prett—e decoreted wer hero—wes forced to surrender both.

"It's a demn shame what [they] were able to do," Pratt said to the *L.A. Times* after emerging from the courtroom, alluding to the evil machinations set in motion by COINTELPRO. "We have so many victims....I'm only one of them." *Sheena Lester*

start

Itchin' for a Scratch

EPMD's DJ goes back to the future

When it comes to turntable theatrix, the man called DJ Scratch has few equals. Spinning for everyone from EPMD to Busta Rhymes, he has dumbfounded audiences by dissecting the vinyl while juggling turntables or disrobing mid-cut. And then there are his patented routines, such as suspending in time Big Daddy Kane's "Friday the 13th I'ma play Jason" line as he emerges from beneath

DAVID PEREZ-SHADI

the set wearing a hockey mask.

So, who better than Scratch to put Pioneer's new Pro DJ System (DJM 300 mixer; two CDJ 500 II CD players) to the test? As we revved up this joint, which claims to provide "unlimited control," jaws of veteran DJs dropped. On-the-fly looping takes a mere two button touches. Beats per minute are measured and displayed for easy adjustment. Cue up a disc, and the supermixer automatically drops the beat with each nudge of the fader—no backspin necessary. But can twiddling knobs ever equal the feel of fingers on rotating wax? We let Scratch decide.... *Jesse Washington*

Does this make deejaying too easy?

Yeah, because your hand isn't touching the CD itself. I should have brought my little son—with this machine, he would just cut all day.

Could you get busy on this?

Yeah, but to really do tricks you have to have your hand on the record. Sometimes I might take a record and juggle it, or throw it on my head, then juggle it again. You can't do those things with a CD. For a club DJ, this joint is the bomb, but it's not so hot for *my* type of DJ—a showman DJ. If your hands aren't on the turntables to show your *real* skills, then you're not good enough. This is like a sampler.

The mixer's got a BPM meter.

That's why it's good for a club DJ—the tempo is right there, so you can easily match up [the record speeds].

What would you add to this setup?

Imagine being in a club with two of these *and* two turntables—that would be some killah shit. Yo, it would be *bugged* if you could put your hands on the CD!

Most hip hop groups don't have DJs anymore.

That's why I call it "the lost art." But even back in the day, with EPMD, there wasn't a lot of DJs around like [Whodini's] Grandmaster Dee—my idol. He never used DATs. Anything that you call an art is considered an art because it's hard as fuck to do. So I'm not mad [at this machine], 'cause you can't do what *I* do on turntables. It's a good tool—but replace turntables? No way.

Vincent Duncan

Grape Crush

Wine tasting with Frank Vincent

Nothing is better than spending a sunny afternoon in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn (*Saturday Night Fever* central) eating fine Italian food and drinking homemade wine with tough-guy actor Frank Vincent. You know Mr. Vincent from his roles in classic Scorsese films such as *Raging Bull*, *GoodFellas*, and *Casino*—plus a hip hop guest appearance in Nas's "Street Dreams" video.

Frank, 46, began his career initially as a drummer. In the 1970s, he and his guitar-playing partner Joe Pesci (yes, *that* Joe Pesci) used to perform in New York nightclubs, where he was exposed to the ways of "wiseguys."

Over a lunch of fresh mozzarella, prosciutto, and roasted peppers, Frank and I were taught—by head Lordz of Brooklyn MC Kaves—how to make the vino. *A special batch of California grapes is double-crushed by hand, leaving the actual grape skins behind....* But Frank already knew the basics.

"You know what happens to these?" he said, pointing to the leftover skins. "That's what they make cognac from." Upon tasting our own potent burgundy brew, Frank remarked, with a twinkle in his eye as bright as his diamond pinkie ring, "One sip, and I'm sailin'!"

Hanging out with Frank is like hanging with your favorite uncle—the cool one who graduated from the school of hard knocks. "It's strange to meet people when they've seen you in tough roles," he says. "They're kind of intimidated by you." He puffs on a cigar, and smiles mischievously. "And that's fun." *Andréa M. Duncan*

STELLA MAGLOIRE (2)

bullets point-blank news

BUENA VISTA/GARY KRUGER

• CHANNEL BOINGO

Steve Bartek, guitarist for the now defunct new wave band Oingo Boingo, is composing the music for ABC's new Saturday morning cartoon, *Nightmare Ned*. A longtime partner of Boingo vocalist Danny Elfman (provider of the weird-science sonics that accompany such movies as *Batman* and *Men in Black* and Fox TV's *The Simpsons*), Bartek is familiar with all sides of the soundtrack biz. "TV is more work than doing movies," says the laid-back L.A. veteran. "It's like having a day job." *Day job?* God forbid.

• AND THE REMIX GRAMMY GOES TO...

In the world of hip hop, careers live or die based on the strength of a remix. Finally, the music establishment is taking notice. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) has decided that next year's Grammy Awards will include a new category honoring the year's best remixer. "This move ensures that NARAS is positioned to meet the growing challenges faced by our diverse and dynamic music community," says Michael Greene, the Academy's President and CEO.

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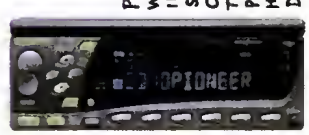

East Meets West

Krishna rap is on the map

Hip hop truly has no boundaries. From gangsta to gospel, the strength and fury of the movement is based on its ability to embrace other music styles and cultures. The arrival of Bhakti marks yet another successful cross-pollination—this time, with India's 5,000-year-old tradition of Hinduism.

Bhakti (Sanskrit for "devotion") is the Dallas-based hip hop project of Reggie Shaw—a Hare Krishna devotee working toward a doctorate degree in theology—whose rhymes are inspired by ancient holy texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, Shrimad Bhagavatam, the Bible, the Qu'ran, and even the Keys of Enoch. Bhakti's debut single, "Quest for Identity," drops soon on the independently distributed Twin Bhudda Records. People, get ready.

Bhakti gives thanks

JAMES BLANC

"Bhakti causes the worlds of black and Indian culture to collide," says Hladini Shakti, a spokesman for the Dallas Krishna temple. "But in the end, the [cultures] confirm rather than destroy each other."

"I use everyday words so I don't put people off," says Shaw, who also rhymes in Hebrew and Sanskrit. Supported by standard-issue jeep beats, Bhakti's songs often deal with death and reincarnation—a major facet of the Hindu belief system. Move over, Bone Thugs—y'all aren't the only ones thinkin' 'bout the crossroads. *Richard Baimbridge*

VIBE's Illuminati Watch

Freedom Lovers, hear me now! Flipping through the late-night cable-TV wasteland recently, I came upon a vision of Armageddon as grim as Mobb Deep's darkest "Apostles' Warning."

The sky above the Red Rocks Amphitheater in Colorado was gray, and rain fell on thousands of white people huddled together in small groups. What had me shook, though, was the expression on all these folks' faces. Wide-eyed and smiling, they stared at the stage like an army of zombies.

And who was the object of such unconditional adoration? Unbelievably, the god head was none other than John Tesh. The former *Entertainment Tonight* cohost and Olympic gymnastics announcer sat his massive frame behind an electric piano, playing the blandest "New Age instrumental pop music" available outside of an elevator. I knew from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* that such mind-numbing sounds were often employed by aliens bent on controlling humans.

I phoned headquarters immediately. "I've discovered a high-level Illuminati operative," I said, catching my breath. "What else have we got on this 'John Tesh'—if that's his real name?" This is what our files had to say:

1) Tesh was a commentator for NBC's controversial tape-delayed broadcast of the 1996 Olympic gymnastics finals. In an effort to convince the television audience that the event was "live" and "spontaneous," Tesh pretended not to know that America had already captured the gold. "There's something in the air this warm Olympic night," Tesh teased, opening the show. "Do you feel it? Little girls are dancing...." Well, it's certainly easier when you've felt it and *seen* it five hours earlier, isn't it, Smarty? Pure "tricknology...."

Tesh in the flesh

WALTER MCBRIDE/RETNA

2) In Detroit, Mich., a brave group of truth-seekers have been picketing Tesh, who has had astonishing success as a platinum-selling solo "recording artist." Going by the name of the National Anti-Tesh Action Society, or N.A.T.A.S. (spell *that* backwards), the organization has attempted to monitor his behavior but claims that his presence causes video cameras to malfunction. Hmmm, what else could *ET* stand for besides *Entertainment Tonight*? It's time to phone home, John.

3) Tesh's response to charges that he is an alien sound specious at best. "I'm six foot six," he told television's *Strange Universe*. "And I can't fathom why anyone would think I could fit into a spacecraft." Come on, John. Do you think we Earthlings are stupid enough to believe that all spaceships are designed for shorties like Yoda? The jig is up. *David Bry*

bullets point-blank news

• QUEEN OF HEARTS

Feeling blue? Consult the scriptures of a Queen. Rapper/actress Queen Latifah has written an inspirational tome. The book, tentatively titled *From the Heart of a Queen*, consists of positive messages and self-esteem tips. "I've been lucky to have role models who helped me develop a strong sense of self," says Latifah. "I hope this book will aid others' self-image." *Heart* is scheduled to be published in 1998 by William Morrow & Company.

• NO MORE HOT MUSIC

In May, a judge in Pennsylvania hit three counterfeiters with the longest jail terms ever handed down for music piracy in the U.S. Brothers Basem, Yaser, and Osama Allan of New Jersey were sentenced to federal prison terms of 12 years and seven months, 11 years, and four years, respectively, for attempting to sell 96 million dollars' worth of bootleg cassette tapes. "This is a crime that is not to be taken lightly," says Frank Creighton, VP of anti-piracy for the Recording Industry Association of America.

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Crackdown

Newspaper retreats from CIA/crack investigation

In August 1996, when the *San Jose Mercury News* published a series alleging that CIA operatives knew that Central American drug dealers were introducing crack into L.A. to fund a secret war, the editors had to know they were making seismic charges. But even the reporter of the "Dark Alliance" series, Gary Webb, seemed surprised at the aftershocks: The Internet crackled with debate, conspiracy theories ran wild, demonstrators were arrested outside CIA headquarters, and Congresswoman Maxine Waters—who represents L.A. neighborhoods devastated by crack—used her clout to initiate a federal investigation.

Webb

COURTESY OF SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

Two months later, the *New York Times*, the *L.A. Times*, and the *Washington Post* published articles discrediting the series. Rather than pursue Webb's allegations, America's three leading papers focused on his reporting, which they considered seriously flawed. Their main objection was to Webb's sensational charge—made without proof—that members of the CIA-backed Nicaraguan rebel army were responsible for introducing crack into black L.A. neighborhoods in the 1980s.

The situation took an unsettling turn when the *Mercury News*, instead of defending its story, sided with its detractors. On May 11, editor Jerry Ceppos wrote an editorial saying the paper had ignored conflicting evidence and oversimplified "the complex issue of how the crack epidemic in America grew." If the paper were to publish the series again, Ceppos said, "it would state fewer conclusions as certainties."

Though disappointed, Webb was not altogether surprised. "This was a story that polarized people within the paper and without," he says. "You had to take sides. The *Mercury News* experienced a lot of outside pressure and decided to take a dive."

The odd thing, though, is that Ceppos's editorial isn't really that much of a dive. It's part apology, part hand-wringing about the inexact science of journalism. Specifically, Ceppos says Webb stated as fact what was merely an estimate of how much money was involved in the crack trade, and that he offered no proof that top CIA officials had any knowledge of a crack/contra link. But Ceppos didn't abandon Webb's central thesis: that "a drug ring associated with the contras sold large quantities of cocaine in inner-city L.A. in the 1980s...and some of those profits went to the contras."

Despite the backpedaling and the CIA's claim that it has no records of any wrongdoing, the Justice Department investigation continues. "If we had conclusive evidence that the CIA was involved," says Rep. Waters, "we wouldn't have asked for an investigation; we would have said 'just go lock 'em up.' But we had strong allegations and suspicions. And that's what investigations are for: Tell us who knew what, when did they know it, and how high did it go. The citizens of this country should not tolerate drug trafficking to support anything the government does."

Despite the backpedaling, the federal investigation continues.

Asked why the paper retreated, a defiant Waters replied, "Jerry Ceppos was intimidated. When the big boys came down on his head, he ran for cover."

Meanwhile, Webb's eight-year relationship with the *Mercury News* has been strained to the breaking point. In June, he was reassigned from Sacramento to sleepy Cupertino, 150 miles from his home. Even worse, editors took him off the crack story and killed his 16,000-word follow-up series, which contains extensive reporting from Central America. "These stories detail which other agencies knew about this—the DEA, the National Security Council—and why they did nothing," Webb claims. Ceppos, who declined to comment for this story, was quoted elsewhere as saying that the follow-ups were in note form and unusable as stories, though Webb maintains his piece has been ready since February.

Still, Webb isn't looking to leave the *Mercury News*—yet. "I've got a family to support. I can't just up and go," he says. "But I do want to continue this investigation with whoever wants to continue it." *Erin Aubry*

bullets point-blank news

DAVID DOUBILET

• DOC CHEATHAM (1905–1997)
On June 2, 91-year-old trumpeter Adolphus Anthony "Doc" Cheatham died of a stroke two days after playing at Washington, D.C.'s Blues Alley. During his 75-year career, the Nashville native performed with New Orleans brass, bebop, and Afro-Caribbean bands, and played with the likes of Cab Calloway, Billie Holiday, and Benny Goodman. In the 1970s, Cheatham added singing to his repertoire, and, in 1980, he began a Sunday brunch series at N.Y.C.'s Sweet Basil, where he performed up until his death.

ROSEMARY CLARK AND JIM HENRY/ALL

• STARKS THE SPARK
N.Y. Knick John Starks is set to appear alongside celebrity offspring Yolanda King (of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther), May May Ali (of Muhammad), and Rhonda Ross (of Diana) in Roger French's upcoming film, *Kima's Song*. French, who is writing, directing, and producing the project about the oft-neglected Amerasian children of black servicemen in Vietnam, became a Starks fan during his stint selling popcorn at Madison Square Garden. "I tip my hat to John," says French. "He's helping a filmmaker bring attention to a world problem."

Art. Moschino Ph. Afanador

Firing Squad

EMI goes Bye-Bye

The demise of the EMI Records label earlier this summer came like a Mike Tyson roundhouse, and everyone from the secretaries to the Big Willies to the Artist himself is trying to pick their jaws up off the canvas.

The London-based record giant EMI Group announced on June 19 that it was pulling the plug on the troubled New York–based music label, which, over the past few years, has been suffering from lackluster sales and a severe inability to produce consistent hits. But the decision left several EMI hit makers—including D'Angelo, AZ, Luther Vandross, Jon Secada, Sinéad O'Connor, Erick Sermon and his Def Squad, and even the Artist Formerly Known As Prince (whose own NPG Records was distributed through EMI)—without a home label.

EMI sources told VIBE that the most important artists would likely find a new home at the EMI Group's two other divisions, Capitol and Virgin Records. Although Virgin is home to Janet Jackson, Shaggy, and Tina Turner, Capitol hasn't had much success with modern urban music. (The label dissolved its black music division last year.) This may cause serious problems when the time comes to develop, market, and promote specialized black acts. Already in limbo are albums by Vandross and David Hollister (formerly of BLACKstreet), who were scheduled to drop joints later this year, as well as brand-new full-lengths from AZ, Gang Starr, and Joi.

D'Angelo

"This isn't something we saw coming," said one worker. "The general feeling here is that for some people, it's going to be hard."

Meanwhile, some 150 employees are now looking for jobs, including EMI Records chief Davitt Sigerson and Ken Berry—the ears behind the multiplatinum selling Spice Girls—who replaced Charles Koppleman as head of North American operations only a few weeks prior. The closing is expected to save the EMI Group more than $65 million annually.

"Nobody knows what's going to happen," one former employee told VIBE just after the announcement was made. "We were about to be on an upswing, but I guess the heads aren't willing to wait. It's ridiculous." *Denene Millner*

Studio Time

In the lab with Gang Starr

Guru, Premier

Wearing casual pants and a stylish sweater, a baldheaded Guru takes a break from laying down the vocal track for "She Knows What She Wants," a new Gang Starr song. "I just got three more verses to go," he says while studying lyric-filled loose-leaf sheets atop an old music stand. And as engineer Eddie Sancho cues the DAT, Guru closes his eyes and begins to flow smoothly over the hypermelodic, DJ Premier–crafted beat.

Tentatively titled *Moment of Truth*, the fifth Gang Starr album will address subjects ranging from Guru's recent problems–like gun possession and assault charges–to the plight of the Hip Hop Nation. "Everything we do is personal," says superproducer DJ Premier, "because it reflects what we actually *feel*."

"Lately, I've been inspired to write more introspective songs," adds Guru as he walks through the door to the vocal booth at Manhattan's D&D Studios, which is decorated with a graffiti painting of Vaughn Bodé's Cheech Wizard character. "And Primo is like a great tailor of beats. He *still* manages to keep everything raw."

The Gang Starr Foundation have been locked in the lab since late January, trying to get their masterwork completed for a fall release. But such pressure won't shut down these playas. "We move real fast in the studio," says Primo, whose deliciously creepy beats conjure thoughts of monster flicks and urban decay. "There have been a few delays; but every time we walk into the studio, we walk out with a finished track."

Thus far, the standout tracks include "B.I. vs. Friendship," which features M.O.P., and the glistening Guru/Inspectah Deck duet, "Above Clouds." There's no question–with Guru on the mike and Premier behind the boards–Gang Starr are guaranteed to be the sure shots in the nine-lucky.

Michael A. Gonzales

bullets point-blank news

• LA ROCK ON

HBO has signed a deal to make a biopic about the life of Clarence "T La Rock" Keaton. La Rock, whose classic 1984 single "It's Yours" was the first release on Def Jam Records, has spent the past three years recovering from brain damage he acquired in a mysterious April 1994 assault. "The movie will tell the details of my life," the Bronx native says, "—what I went through in the hospital, and what I went through in the nursing home." Hip hop, you don't stop.

• FOREVER YOURS, SNOOPY

Snoop Doggy Dogg is a pup no more. On June 14, hip hop's most eligible bachelor (sorry, Ginuwine) wed longtime girlfriend Chante Taylor in a private ceremony in L.A. Snoop, 25, and Taylor, 22, started dating while she was in high school (Snoop was her prom date) and have lived together for the past few years. Snoop's mother and father attended the ceremony, as did the couple's two children, three-year-old Cordé and newborn Cordell. Celebrate good times, come on!

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start

Flippin' Scripts

A black stuntwoman's tale

In the name of Angela Bassett and other chocolate Hollywood vixens, La Faye Baker has been beat down, thrown through windows, and dragged violently across floors by her hair. But please don't cry for her—this thirtysomething L.A. native has represented as a stunt woman on the sets of movies such as *What's Love Got to Do With It* and *True Lies* for more than eight years.

Baker, who used to be a deputy probation officer in L.A., was turned onto stunting by a fellow officer already involved in the profession. "He said, 'You look like somebody who'd be interested in being a stuntwoman,'" she recalls. "I was, like, Boy, you crazy! Because the first thing that comes to mind is *danger*." Her fears were soon put to rest, however, when she began training with top black stuntman Greg Elam.

Moneymaker Baker

CADE MITCHENER

Baker's new profession hasn't exactly been pain-free. "I got injured during a motorcycle jump last year," says Baker, who, in her youth, made the *Guinness Book of World Records* for twirling 58 Hula-Hoops at once. "I broke both of my jaws and fractured my chin and multiple mandibles."

Though she's bounced back, there's always the problem of finding steady work. "It's very competitive because there are so few roles for black actresses, [which means] limited roles for black stuntwomen....But it's getting better." Baker's recently done stunts in *Con Air* and UPN's *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* on which "this guy threw me over the railing of a balcony fifteen feet above the ground."

And what sort of wild things run through Baker's mind mid-freefall? "I never try to think while in the process of doing a stunt," she says. "I just try to hit my mark. People who are daredevils are people who think wild things. Stunt people aren't daredevils. We're into safety." *Gabe Soria*

Sound Check

Bobbito plays the tracks, Chuck Brown states the facts

Chuck Brown and his band, the Soul Searchers, have been pumping funk for more than a quarter of a century. The 1971 tune "We the People" is a megaclassic at Uprock jams in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Their 1979 No. 1 R&B hit "Bustin' Loose" is a megaclassic at any B-boy jam *anywhere*. Brown, "the Godfather of Go-go," helped create the driving percussive beat—Latin flavored, R&B based—that originated in Washington, D.C. in the '70s. The only way to experience go-go is LIVE!!, so catch one of Chuck's sweat-drenched, pourin'-it-all-out, marathon performances—hopefully, he'll be touring in a city near you.

• The Soul Searchers — "Funk to the Folks"

C.B.: "Ummm, funk to the folks, y'all!!" This is one of the main tunes off our *Salt of the Earth* LP.

B: Bro, I paid twenty-five cents for this record at a used clothes store. They had no idea. The drum break on this is phenomenal.

C.B.: We worked eight days a week when this was out; we'd do a gig every weeknight, then two or three shows a day Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Heads coming to every show. That's when the go-go sound developed. That break you like, we'd take it and extend it long. Then we'd get the crowd's call and response started. You could hear it better 'cause it'd be only percussion in the background.

• Trouble Funk — "Pump Me Up"

C.B.: My boys, Trouble Funk. Those young brothers used to come see us all the time. This is one of their biggest hits.

B: This was a jam in New York.

C.B.: Go-go now is a lot slower.

B: Even rap and R&B are a lot slower now too.

C.B.: See, around '76, disco took over, so we had to cut the beat in half to make it our own sound, the go-go sound. We were one of the few bands still getting shows during the disco era.

• Pucho and His Latin Soul Brothers — Medley: "Superfly / Pusherman / Freddie's Dead"

C.B.: I used to have a lot of vinyl like you, dating back to the '40s.

B: You must've had some 78s, then?

C.B.: Oh yeah, 78s, 45s; I had records that weighed a ton. This sounds like Isaac Hayes. Who is this?

B: Pucho. He redid a couple of songs, but with some serious Latin flavor.

C.B.: Great sound. Our band does a lot of covers, everybody from Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, Lou Rawls, Eddie Kendricks, Al Green. We'd do a whole album like *Shaft* from the first song to the last.

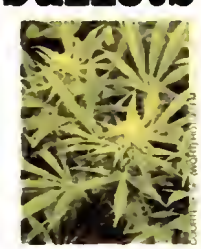
• Buckshot LeFonque — "Another Day"

C.B.: I love this groove. This reminds me of the time we performed in New York and Chaka Khan did a two-hour set with us. I was trying to light a cigarette and I turned around and there she was with a light. We did a groove that sounded something like this. We couldn't release it, but, *man*, she can sing. I see you like to sing too.

B: Only in the shower.

C.B.: Well, that's how I started too. I used to sing and play my guitar at cookouts and lawn parties. Chickens be walking around, I play a wrong note and a chicken come and peck my feet! I was playing for chicken sandwiches, barbecue, and beer.

bullets point-blank news



COURTESY MCDONALD

• OOPS, THERE IT IS

Steven Gibson—one half of the Tag Team duo whose triple platinum "Whoomp! (There It Is)" became an unofficial NBA slogan in 1993—was busted on May 17 unloading 700 pounds of marijuana from a pickup truck parked in front of his Atlanta residence. Asking that he be held without bail, federal drug agents are charging the rapper with possession with intent to distribute. Intent to distribute? As if 31-year-old Gibson, whose nickname is "Steve Roll'n," couldn't smoke it all himself.

• SEQUEL FULL OF BLUES

They're *still* on a mission from God. Universal Pictures has begun production on *Blues Brothers 2000*, the sequel to the 1980 pop classic starring Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi. The movie picks up after Elwood (Aykroyd) is released from prison—sibling Jake (Belushi) died in the joint—and enlists the help of Mack McTeer (John Goodman) to help raise money for a children's hospital wing. Cameos from the original include James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and the original Blues Brothers Band. Goodman's fine—but what about Redman and Meth?

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start

Betty Shabazz 1936–1997

Betty in 1970

BETTMANN

She was much more than the background to his foreground, this woman who was wed to Malcolm X. Betty Shabazz—who lost her husband to the people, and then to the shotgun—died June 23 after suffering for three weeks from third-degree burns across 80 percent of her body. She was 61 years old.

Malcolm, referencing the Bible, asked his wife not to cry when he was gone—"The salt from your tears," he warned, "will make you bitter"—and she didn't. Instead, she took on the enormous tasks of single-handedly making women out of six little girls, keeping a poor, fatherless household intact, and being her own woman when everyone else expected her to be Malcolm.

Of the three most prominent African-American widows of the civil rights era—along with Coretta Scott King and Myrlie Evers-Williams—Dr. Betty Shabazz was the one who shunned the spotlight the most. When her husband was assassinated before her very eyes in Harlem's Audubon Ballroom, in 1965, the then 28-year-old Betty X swore off mingling with society. "I'm private," she said in a 1992 interview. "But there were some public things I had to do because of [Malcolm's] commitment to the cause. I loved him, and he loved the people."

Betty, Ilysah, and Malcolm, circa 1963

CHUNBURG CENTER VAN HASSELT, NYGMA

Despite the demands of single motherhood, Shabazz found time to earn a doctorate in education and administration from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, in 1975. She went on to become director of communications and public relations at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, and spoke regularly at conferences about child welfare, education, and race relations. She was the epitome of black girl power, with her abrupt, sideswept 'do—reserved and dignified, but fiercely strong nonetheless.

It was Shabazz's grandson Malcolm, the 12-year-old namesake of his granddaddy, who allegedly set the fire that took her life. Authorities say Malcolm started the blaze because he wanted to return to the Texas home of his mom, Qubilah Shabazz, but was not allowed. Qubilah was busy coping with troubles of her own. In 1995 she was charged with plotting to kill Louis Farrakhan, who she believed had something to do with her father's slaying. And although the charges were dismissed this past May, Qubilah was ordered by the court to undergo two years of psychiatric and chemical dependency treatment.

Much like his family, many of us loved Malcolm—though from a distance. We sported his X on our hats and shoved his autobiography in our pockets, and proudly repeated his "By any means necessary" line. And we put his wife on a pedestal. But for all the glory we wanted to attribute to the Shabazz clan, it has become clear that they were, like any normal family, far from perfect. And they suffered.

Now, they suffer more. Dr. Betty Shabazz may have been the wife of the warrior known as Malcolm X, but she fought her own private wars. And so we mourn the soldier, the mother, the grandma, the student, the administrator, the striver—the champion. May she rest peacefully.

Denene Millner

Etc....Etc....Etc.....

Money talks—and walks: A sizable percentage of the proceeds from the April 12 Haitian relief benefit concert organized by the Fugees is, um, missing. The newspaper *Haiti Progress* has reported that the event (coproduced by the Haitian government) earned $476,000, but only $350,000 has been accounted for. Wyclef is reportedly pissed, and is planning yet another concert—to happen in the U.S.—to settle the score....**Naughty by nurture?:** On June 12, Anthony "Treach" Criss and Vinnie "Vinrock" Brown were arrested in Harlem on weapons charges after the Five-O pulled them over for reckless driving. Both lyric pythons were strapped with 9mm pistols. Maybe they can use the O.P.P. defense—you know, other peoples' pistols....**Excuse me, yo?:** Covering the Carey-Mottola separation, the *New York Post*'s Jeane MacIntosh referred to A Tribe Called Quest's abstract poet Q-Tip as a "gangsta rapper." *What?* That's like saying Big Bird is more violent than two great white sharks, a barrel of monkeys, and 36 killah bees. *New York Post*, Jeane MacIntosh, check yourselves before you wreck yourselves....**Ya played ya self:** Smoothed-out television host Bryant Gumbel recently paid $8,000 for a day of golf with multiethnic powerhouse Tiger Woods. Man, Puffy would have done it for $7,500.

Tip

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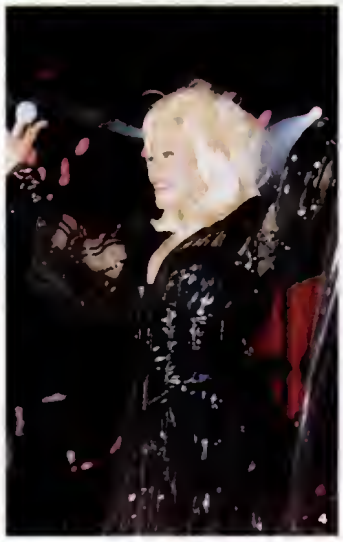
In the MIX

Sun Is Shinin'

start

1. Cee-Lo of the Goodie MOb speaks before Minister Louis Farrakhan and recent Nation of Islam convert Benjamin Muhammad at the Peace Making Rally (a.k.a. Day of Atonement for Rappers) at Salaam restaurant in Chicago. 2. You decide: Smiling Grant Hill can't take his eyes off a) girlfriend Tamia's birthday cake or b) the birthday girl? 3. In recognition of his doing all the right things, a happy Spike Lee recently received an honorary doctorate of fine arts at Brooklyn College in New York. 4. Patti LaBelle, all dolled up by Ronald McDonald's personal stylist in New Orleans, apparently does believe she can fly. 5. Golf tournaments often evoke special feelings in men, especially those tournaments sponsored by the LAPD. Perhaps that's why actor Samuel Jackson is experiencing a tingling sensation in his unmentionables. 6. Don King with Snoop Doggy Dogg in the studio recording a St. Ides commercial. Be careful, Snoop, one more sip and Don might blow. 7. At an SCLC convention in Atlanta, the newest addition to the psychic friends community, Esther Rolle, still gets love. 8. Oran "Juice" Jones, seen here maxin' and relaxin' with two lady friends (proving he still ranks among R&B's original macks), ain't out walking in the rain no more. 9. Power attorney and urban folk hero Johnnie Cochran takes a minute out of his busy schedule rescuing celebrities on the verge of incarceration to pose for a quick flick with his wife, Dale. 10. Would someone please spare Andre Rison further injury and inform Left Eye that "Bring the Pain" is just the title of a song, not words to live by. 11. Three of the hardest-working men in show business—Heavy D, Don Cornelius, and L.L. Cool J—step off the Soul Train just long enough to smile pretty for the camera in L.A.

Margeaux Watson



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Here's the direction.
You thought milk was just a kid thing. But the plot thickens and you discover your bones are still growing until you're 35. You're on a mad quest for calcium. AND... ACTION. You open the fridge, you grab the lowfat milk, you drink it. CUT. Not from the carton. TAKE 2. Let's use a glass.
MILK
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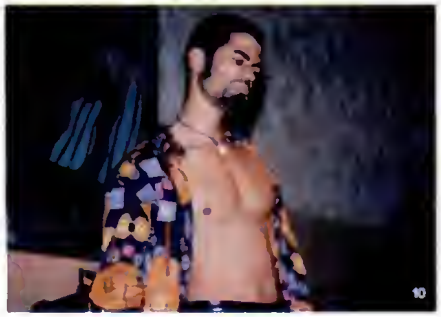
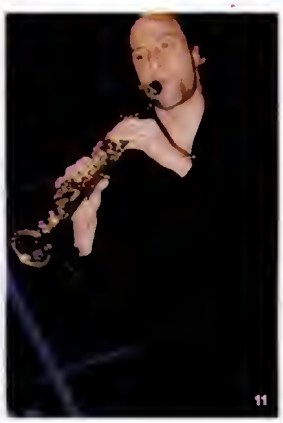
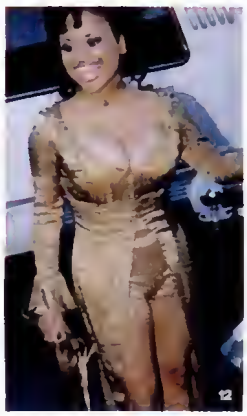
In the MIX Too

Keep on Pushin'

start

1. Hmmm, wonder why there're no more roses in Spanish Harlem. Could it be that actress Tisha Campbell had them all flown to L.A. and pasted onto this dress? 2. Dru Hill and Immature—exactly what is it that makes us look at them and wonder: *Why*? 3. Yeah, right. I'm sure Chauncey and Teddy Riley of BLACKstreet both received incoming calls on their cell phones just as this photo was taken. 4. Allure and Mariah Carey backstage at the Palladium in N.Y.C.: Dream Girls or Cupie Dolls? It's a tough call to make. 5. Parrish Smith tries to save face at the EPMD reunion, held at Tommy Knockers in N.Y.C., during which the other half of the dynamic duo, Erick Sermon, was nowhere in sight. 6. Christopher Williams and wife, Natalie, hangin' tough at the Las Vegas Hilton. 7. Like an Eveready battery, Lil' Kim is always willing to take us there. Here she is at Impact in N.Y.C, once again showing off the gems that made her solo debut LP, *Hardcore*, a platinum-selling success. 8. No shame in her game, Brooklyn's finest, Foxy Brown, flashes the jewels and her ill na-na backstage at Club Onyx in South Beach, Fla. 9. Shame on you, Johnny Kemp—no screaming at the audience. It's not their fault they don't remember you! 10. Don't pout, Eric Benét, one day someone's going to ride your pony. 11. Kenny G at Radio City Music Hall blowing his little saxophone with all his heart, trying to be the best jazz musician he can be. 12. Excuse me, who told actress Michelle Thomas of *Family Matters* that this was a coming out party? *M.W.*

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Hellavision

Fear notyourenemies
For they can only kill you.
Fear not your friends
For they can only betray you.
Fear only the indifferent, who permit the killers and betrayers to walk safely on earth.
–Edward Yashinsky

Imagine, if you will, that the President of the United States is holding a press conference to explain his role in the Whitewater scandal. But just as he's about to speak, an ashy haze suddenly engulfs your television screen. Then a hard-boiled cartoon character emerges from the fog. You stab at your remote, trying to surf away from this guy, but he controls all 300-some-odd channels simultaneously. He's disguised as a tele-journalist, but you can tell in his voice that he takes the position of a vigilante:

We interrupt this program for the following Justice League Alert. This message is of international concern, directed to all those between the ages of 18 and 33 1/3 who qualify to be part of the misunderstood yet powerful demographic formerly known as Generation X. Anybody else receiving this signal, do not attempt to adjust your tracking, because we cannot be traced. You didn't invite us to the party, so we threw our own.

Hackers and Hardrocks. You career-minded individuals and high and LO-level criminals. To the skaters and the player haters. To all future Ballerz®, and the now yes y'allers. To anyone who knows they're someone, trying hard to get somewhere, but doesn't know where *there* is... keep watching. There is a solution visible.

It has come to be very clear to the average working stiff who can barely make ends meet that the great American promise package presented by leaders of the government has failed to deliver the goods. They have not yet managed to eliminate taxes, build more schools than prisons, create jobs, and, more important, cut us in on the cake action, monetarily speaking. And how could they fulfill these obligations when they're not in control anyway? It should be painfully clear by now that it's the multinational corporations that are influencing the real changes in city, state, and global legislation.

I live in one of the greatest cities in the world, No-Shorts–and that's exactly what we don't take anymore. But when big firms start buying up properties in affordable areas, taking over prime real estate and "jazzing up" the neighborhood, this seriously affects how much we have left after the rent is paid. If they expand, so does the threat! They spend billions a year on advertising aimed at our entertainment-stained brains, just so they can get their chubby hands in our pockets. And what do we do? Let them jerk us a hot soda!

Well, I don't drink pop! I don't trust the Net or the people on it! Furthermore, the whole idea of a World Wide Web sounds like I'm caught up in something that's sticky! Why should some stuffed-shirt jerk get paid off our ideas when we don't see any luchini? When will we stop letting these guys extort from us? This is it, y'all!

In my opinion, these CEOs and presidents who sit atop old money corporations aren't in tune with the big picture. Their arrogance insults our intelligence. Do they really think they're gonna be around forever? Most of the stiffs in power have been dead for years, and *they* don't even know it! Their jam is coming to an end, while ours runs all night until the dawn's early light.

Who will take a stand and demand that big business and its underboss–the government–settle the retroactive debt that's due to *we* the people? Who will demand that the kids of Camelot have a seat on every board of advisors and a voice in every public company that markets to future generations?

The ideal candidate wouldn't be from the Democratic or the Republican party. He or she won't be labeled a liberal or a conservative either. To lead our multiethnic and triracial gang, they would have to hang at the kind of party that everyone wants to get into–the After-Party.

This worldwide youth movement needs a special kind of leader. Think of him as a walking all-access pass who's loved by, and can ID with, the man on the street as well as the spoiled little rich kids from the mountains. The perfect choice would be perfectly honest about his own imperfections and weaknesses. Not some snot-nosed college grad who uses learned knowledge as their pass into *our* thing–you know the type, the ones who read a book, get a kufi, and scream "Join the revolution" from inside their air-conditioned glass house. Is that what we need–more fat-ass couch potatoes who eat lunch à la carte at some expensive restaurant and pay for it with their plastic how-could-you-stay-down card?

I say nay. Let us be led by somebody who knows what it's like to struggle as the unfavored underdog. Preferably an ex-con or former drug and alcohol abuser who's managed to get their life back on track, knowing that a man with balls always bounces back.

What is the After-Party's platform, you may ask? All the things you love to hate: loud music, expensive cars, good food, better sex, and lots of money! Why? Because we deserve it. We're willing to get it the old-fashioned way: by earning it. What we're proposing–and what the media and the disgustingly rich need to understand–is this: Since we are the future, it's time to enforce our position by taking control of it today!

Of course, the candidate will have to go on the road and campaign. That's the best part. Watch for the future leader of the free world–he'll be the one navigating an 18-wheeler filled with state-of-the-art audio equipment. He's sure to be rolling through your stereozone soon, looking for a place to G-off. Stay tuned to find out when the After-Party will be throwing an all-nighter on your block or which college campuses will be occupied next.

And one more thing: Once this party starts, you can bet there will be no shady outside investors. This world tour will be sponsored by Brother Louie's Chicken Shop and good ol' Kool-Aid. Come out and enjoy the free-spirited debate, and let's show the big boys that we're free to challenge whomever we want–'cause when freedom becomes outlawed, only outlaws will be free.

We now return you to your regularly scheduled programming....

Tuph Street

By **Bönz Malone**

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Voodoo Ray Gun

start

Multinational corporations aren't always bad. Sometimes they have their uses. Take Sony, for example. Its label Columbia/Legacy is about to release 10 CDs of Miles Davis material, some of which has been unavailable in this country for more than two decades. All of these discs hail from Miles's much-discussed, often-vilified, and little-understood electric period of the '70s—a period that commenced with the release of 1969's *In a Silent Way* and ended with the dread *Agharta* in 1976. For many traditionalists who'd followed Davis since the '40s and '50s (when he got put on by Charlie Parker and, in turn, put on John Coltrane), *Silent Way* was where they got off the bus.

Miles's abandoning of acoustic jazz was as sudden and shocking as if the bus Rosa Parks had made famous were transformed, overnight, into the Kool-Aid-Acid-Test mobile on which Ken Kesey experimented with LSD. Miles lost some old fans with this transition, but gained a generation of new ones in the process. Under the influence of Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone, and James Brown, his music changed, his clothes changed, and so did the venues he performed in. From familiar jazz haunts like the Village Vanguard, Miles graduated to full-on psychedelic auditoriums like Bill Graham's Fillmore East, where he once shared a bill with Neil Young and the Steve Miller Band.

Though his music became louder, weirder, and wilder, the high level of musicianship for which Miles was known remained consistent. As was the case during the 1950s—when his sidemen included Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, and Philly Joe Jones—Miles continued to have the baddest bands in the land, featuring, and introducing, players who would go on to become influential leaders themselves. You may know some of them: Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul (founders of Weather Report), Tony Williams, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, Gary Bartz, Keith Jarrett, Billy Cobham, Michael Henderson, Sonny Fortune, Jack DeJohnette, David Leibman, Mtume, Reggie Lucas, and Pete Cosey. Judging by the monumental ways in which these players changed the music, Miles was clearly the Louis B. Mayer of jazz.

Once Miles went electric, he never went back. It was as if he was on a vision quest where only high voltage could supply the illumination and enlightenment he required. If you'd like a sweeping overview (with some new twists), I'd suggest starting with *Panthalssa: The Music of Miles Davis 1969–1974*, a selection of recordings from the electronic period remixed by experimental impresario Bill Laswell. It's comprised of the nearly 20-minute title track from *Silent Way* and shorter excerpts from 1972's *On the Corner* and 1973's double-album set, *Get Up With It*. In addition, there are two revelatory cuts that have been collecting dust until now. Whereas the original *Silent Way* album was seamlessly edited by producer Teo Macero, Laswell has provided what feels like a cutaway view into the recording process of this epic and architectonic work.

KEEP THE TAPES ROLLING
Miles's electric era lives again—louder, weirder, wilder.

COURTESY OF SONY MUSIC

Back in the day, Miles and Teo's philosophy was "keep the tapes rolling." Miles would conduct the 10–20 assembled musicians through unrehearsed segments, stopping and starting at will, and sequencing soloists as the music seemed to demand it. The raw results were then taken back to the lab by Macero for cutting and pasting. For this reason, I like to say that Miles was making hip hop before the digital age—looping tape the old-fashioned way, by hand rather than by microchip. Some of the music on these CDs sounds like it was recorded the day after tomorrow as opposed to two decades ago.

In fact, *On the Corner* gets our vote for the world's first hip hop album. Listening to its snapdragon high-hat and snare patterns, it's hard to believe that there wasn't any Akai equipment in the room to convert analog attack and decay into an infinitely repeatable binary code. The original *Corner* was album-length, but Laswell has given us a tasty snippet that segues into a long-forgotten track titled "Rated X." Hearing this cut fresh out of the vaults after nearly 25 years on lockdown took me back to the days when a new Miles release meant time stood still, and for the next couple of weeks, my partners and I would scrutinize and absorb the master's latest revelations from the electric frontier.

What Miles guaranteed was a journey into exotic melody and fervent funk that only vaguely referenced other music. Sly and Jimi were in there somewhere; but from the first note, you knew it could only be Miles. Still, in the short period between *Silent Way* and *Corner*, he had completely changed his trumpet sound and approach. Adding a wah-wah pedal brought him closer to Hendrix, both rhythmically and sonically. The wah-wah also drew a whimpering mutant growl out of his horn that was reminiscent of Sly's deep-throated slurs and yawns. Overall, the blues and African percussion became a more pronounced force in Miles's music the more he turned up the power-generated juice.

By the time of *Get Up With It*, the band included three guitarists—Pete Cosey, Reggie Lucas, and Dominique Gaumont—*conguero* Mtume, and the pivotal bassist/point man Michael Henderson, Miles's Michael Jordan since the recording of 1971's *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*. The two tracks Laswell selected from *Get Up*, "Rated X" and "He Loved Him Madly," will make contemporary listeners do a double take because they sound as if Tricky and Goldie had gotten over their Björk issues and resolved to get together to create beauty. "Madly," it should be noted, was Miles's tribute to the then recently deceased Duke Ellington, who always used to tell his audiences, "I love you madly." It sounds nothing like anything Duke ever recorded, but it's full of mourning, passion, poetry, and integrity: It's Miles honoring Duke's originality and obsessive pursuit of swing with his own variation on the same.

After the Laswell sampler, you'll be ready to dive into the bounty of two-disc live sets—*Miles Davis at Fillmore*, *Live-Evil*, *Black Beauty*, *Miles Davis in Concert: Live at Philharmonic Hall*, and my personal favorite, 1974's *Dark Magus* (recorded at Carnegie Hall, but until now only released in Japan). *Magus* features the live-wire loose-cannon guitar of Chicago's own Pete Cosey, who, on the right night, could make Hendrix seem like a punk. This set also throws ample light on bassist Henderson's fluid and supple ability to guide the band from deep-in-the-pocket phonk to ambient abstraction without ever sacrificing the groove to the forces of chaos or incoherence.

When Miles passed in 1991, my music mentor, Ulysses Garner, remarked: "The tragedy is that we'll never be able to expect hearing somthing we've never heard before." Now, thanks to Sony, a new generation can get a late pass and catch up with the future of music as prophesied by Miles Dewey Davis. You never heard such sounds in your life.

Black-Owned

By Greg Tate

MICHAEL JORDAN

SERIAL No.0023

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Tuskegee 2?

In AIDS-ravaged Africa, a controversial drug study is leaving pregnant women at risk and stirring outrage. *By Harry Allen*

On May 16, 1997, President Clinton issued a statement many considered long overdue: an apology, on behalf of the United States government, to the survivors and families of the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study, in which the U.S. Public Health Service withheld treatment from black males with syphilis so that it could observe the disease's progression.

"The United States government did something that was wrong—deeply, profoundly, morally wrong," said the President, who shared a podium with Vice President Al Gore; Dr. David Satcher, an African-American who is director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and Mr. Herman Shaw, 94, one of five attending Tuskegee survivors. "I am sorry that your federal government orchestrated a study so clearly racist. That can never be allowed to happen again."

But some contend it *is* happening again—in Cote d'Ivoire, Africa. This time, though, the disease is AIDS. The participants are 1,500 poor, pregnant, HIV-positive African women. The study is a two-and-a-half-year, $690,000 inquest being conducted by Dr. Satcher's Atlanta-based CDC. (The CDC is also conducting a similar study in Thailand. Meanwhile, the National Institute of Health (NIH) is separately conducting *seven* studies in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, and Malawi. Six similar studies are being carried out by foreign governments, again mostly in Africa.)

Half of the women in the CDC study are receiving a regimen of AZT, while the other half, the "control group," are being given sugar pills, or "placebos." Although control groups are a standard component of many drug trials, outraged critics (chiefly the D.C.-based watchdog group Public Citizen) charge that their use in this life-or-death study is unethical and runs against U.S. federal regulations.

In a stern 11-page letter to cabinet secretary Donna Shalala (whose Department of Health and Human Services funds the CDC and NIH), a panel of physicians from Public Citizen charges that the studies are "a clear violation of all of the major international ethical guidelines," including the Helsinki agreement and the Nuremberg Code (adopted after World War Two to prevent a recurrence of anything resembling Nazi concentration-camp experiments).

"Researchers involved in these experiments have exploited the inadequacies of the health-care systems in these developing countries to conduct research they would never even consider in the U.S.," the letter states. "It's Tuskegee, part 2," says Public Citizen's Dr. Sidney Wolfe, "and this time many more people will die."

So far, Wolfe and the five other physicians who signed the letter have received no formal response.

Is the Tuskegee comparison accurate? Dr. Satcher of the CDC says absolutely not. "Whenever anybody has a criticism today of any study," he says, "the tendency is to call it 'Tuskegee-like,' because Tuskegee is the ultimate example of ethical misconduct."

Between 1932 and 1972, the Alabama-based experiments—detailed in James H. Jones's searing book *Bad Blood*—recruited 399 men, mostly poor and illiterate sharecroppers who were infected with late-stage syphilis. Without telling them that they were involved in a medical study—or, unbelievably, that they even *had* syphilis—doctors merely observed as the men came down with complications, such as blindness or insanity. An estimated 107 died wretched, painful deaths.

But the most notorious portion of the experiment was this: Even after penicillin became widely available as a treatment for syphilis, in 1947, none of the men ever received a drop. The drug that could have saved their lives was *deliberately* withheld.

AP/WIDE WORLD

Tuskegee survivor Herman Shaw, 94, accepts the President's apology 27 years after the fact.

The African AZT trials are different in many regards. First of all, the women know they are HIV-positive. They are told that they have the opportunity to participate in a study, and, most importantly, they're told that if they do participate, they will randomly be given either AZT or a placebo. "Neither you nor your doctor will know which pills you are receiving," reads the standard consent form—which also allows for withdrawal from the experiment at any time.

The aspect to which protesting doctors object, and which they claim most resembles Tuskegee, is this: Overseeing the placebo group requires physicians to withhold AZT treatment while hundreds of black, mostly poor and illiterate pregnant females—and, potentially, their babies—die wretched, painful deaths.

Dr. Phillip Nieburg, a CDC associate director of science who worked on the study, refutes the charge that it is unethical. "Women who would ordinarily not have access to anything receive either AZT or placebo in these trials. No one is denied any medicine that they would have outside the study. If the women were denied a drug that's available to the general population, that would clearly be unethical."

This does little to appease Dr. Peter Lurie, the South African–born research associate who was the architect of the protest letter. "We think the study should be redesigned. The comparison arm should be some form of AZT similar to that given in 076," he says, referring to the code number for the standard U.S. regimen of AZT.

A sense of the perinatal AIDS crisis's awesome scale is useful here. The World Health Organization estimates that, in three years, the number of HIV-positive pregnant women in the world will be roughly equal to the population of New York City. In the U.S., some 7,000 infants are born to HIV-infected women every year, 15–30 percent of whom will have the virus.

In the developing world—the poor, nonwhite countries of the planet—that same number are born in fewer than *two days*. Complicating the plague is the fact that the 076 protocol—which requires AZT to be given from the beginning of pregnancy through breast-feeding—involves pills, IVs, and pediatric syrup that cost about $1,000. Not an outrageous amount in San Francisco, perhaps, or even rural Kentucky; but in Cote d'Ivoire, this sum is what the average woman would spend on *all* health care over the course of a century.

"We absolutely understand that 076 isn't affordable," says Lurie, "and we agree with the goal of the research, which is to find cheaper forms of 076, or other kinds of effective, cheaper drugs. The question is, How do you get there? And when you go in with all of the NIH or CDC funding, we don't see any reason not to give the drug to these people."

"We're not a funding agency," says Nieburg, deflecting Lurie's claims. "We don't have a supply of AZT that we've squirreled away for some other purposes. So there's no access at the research sites to the amounts of AZT you're talking about." Moreover, he says that without a placebo control group, the study will provide no answers about the efficacy of treatment or its side effects, and thus will be completely useless.

But the answers to bigger questions—about who lives, who dies, and why—are, frustratingly, not yet in sight. "These very poor countries," says Nieburg, "have to make some very tough choices about scarce health resources."

POWER

For more on this topic, see Baruch Brody's *Ethical Issues in Drug Testing, Approval, and Pricing* (Oxford University Press)

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Live to Tell

How to raise a family when you're HIV-positive. A survivor speaks. *By Farai Chideya*

Her speech is peppered with an incongruous mix of homegirlisms and clinical language like "viral load" and "T-cell count." She's a lovely brown-skinned woman with her hair pulled back, a gold stud in her nose, and two hoops in each ear. Her name is Dawn, she's a mother of five, and she's HIV-positive. She represents the face of AIDS in urban America.

I spoke to Dawn at the offices of New York City's HIV Law Project. At the time of our interview, the organization was starting a hot line for mothers who learn they're HIV-positive when their newborn babies are tested under a new state law. The law is controversial because testing newborns doesn't actually reveal whether or not they will have AIDS—all children of infected mothers test positive at birth, but 75 percent naturally "zero convert" to HIV-negative—but it does tell city hospitals, nurses, and anyone with access to medical records that the mother is HIV-positive.

Women who learn they're HIV-positive while they're pregnant have another decision to make—whether or not to take AZT. The drug reportedly reduces the newborn's chances of getting AIDS, but new studies suggest that it might also increase the baby's chances of developing cancer.

Without proper counseling, women with AIDS—most of them black or brown and poor—will have a hard time making good medical, legal, and emotional decisions for themselves and their children. In Dawn's opinion, women with HIV must be armed with knowledge to survive.

"I wanna be here to help my youngest son graduate from high school," says Dawn. "I got a long way to go."

Give us a thumbnail sketch of your life.

I'm 32 years old. I was born and raised in the Bronx in a middle-class neighborhood. My mother was a struggling single mom. Now I'm a mom. My children are fourteen, eleven, seven, one who's almost five, and a two year old. Three daughters and two sons.

How did you find out you were HIV-positive?

I had taken a couple of AIDS tests before the birth of my last two children. They came back negative. The man I was dealing with was in the risk category, which is why I took the test. He was an IV-drug user; he was also very promiscuous. When I was pregnant with my last child, we broke up. As far as I know, this man knew he was infected but just didn't do anything about it or say anything about it.

You knew your boyfriend was at risk. Why didn't you protect yourself?

I have questioned myself about that. I didn't use condoms. He was an IV-drug user, but when I met him he was in recovery nine years. He didn't give me the impression I needed to worry about that. What I did need to worry about was him sleeping with everything that moved. When you're in love, you're stupid.

How and when did you find out you were HIV-positive?

It was '94. I was tested in the hospital after the birth of my last child. The nurse called a family member because I was living in a shelter with my children at the time. She said, "It's very imperative that Dawn get in touch with us at this time." Right there, it's like, red light. Something's wrong. I'm not *stupid.*

When she showed me the results—a big HIV 1 on a piece of paper—I was quiet for about ten seconds, and then I said, Now what do I do? She said, "You're not going to cry? You're not going to scream?" I said, If I scream, is it going to make it go away? Tell me what I can do to take care of myself.

Are there enough AIDS services in urban communities?

No. In New York, it's geared toward lower Manhattan. The services are branching out, but it hasn't gone far enough. One group, Momentum, is here. They have a spiritual advisor, nutrition counseling, and a social worker. You get a hot meal, and everyone who comes in feels part of a family.

If you're newly diagnosed, what's the first step in getting good AIDS care?

First, you get a COBRA case manager. That's someone who's hired through the city to get all the care you need for yourself—housing, money, food stamps. You can find them in a hospital, neighborhood clinics, or AIDS-service organizations.

Do you think most women who are HIV-positive or at risk know where to go for information?

No, they don't. These women now having babies are going to be tested. When they find out they're positive, they are going to lose their minds. Some are going to be suicidal. Those addicted to drugs may stay on them. I can speak from experience because I was one of these people. But when I got my diagnosis, I turned my life around. I left drugs alone. I wanna be here to help my youngest son graduate from high school. He's two and a half years old. I got a long way to go.

Do you believe that the new drug therapies offer new hope?

I was reading that the death rate has gone down with the new drugs. Excellent! But the newest drugs—the protease inhibitors—are very expensive, like $15,000 a year. I can't even picture that. And once you start with them, you can never leave them alone, because your body will adapt to them, and they may not help you later when you really need them.

What would you say to all the people who haven't been tested?

I'm a firm believer that you can't fight what you don't know. I believe anybody that's sexually active should be tested, period. People from all walks of life have this now. It's no longer just a gay-men's issue or an IV-drug-user's issue.

What if you had a girlfriend who found out she was HIV-positive and pregnant? What advice would you give her about taking AZT?

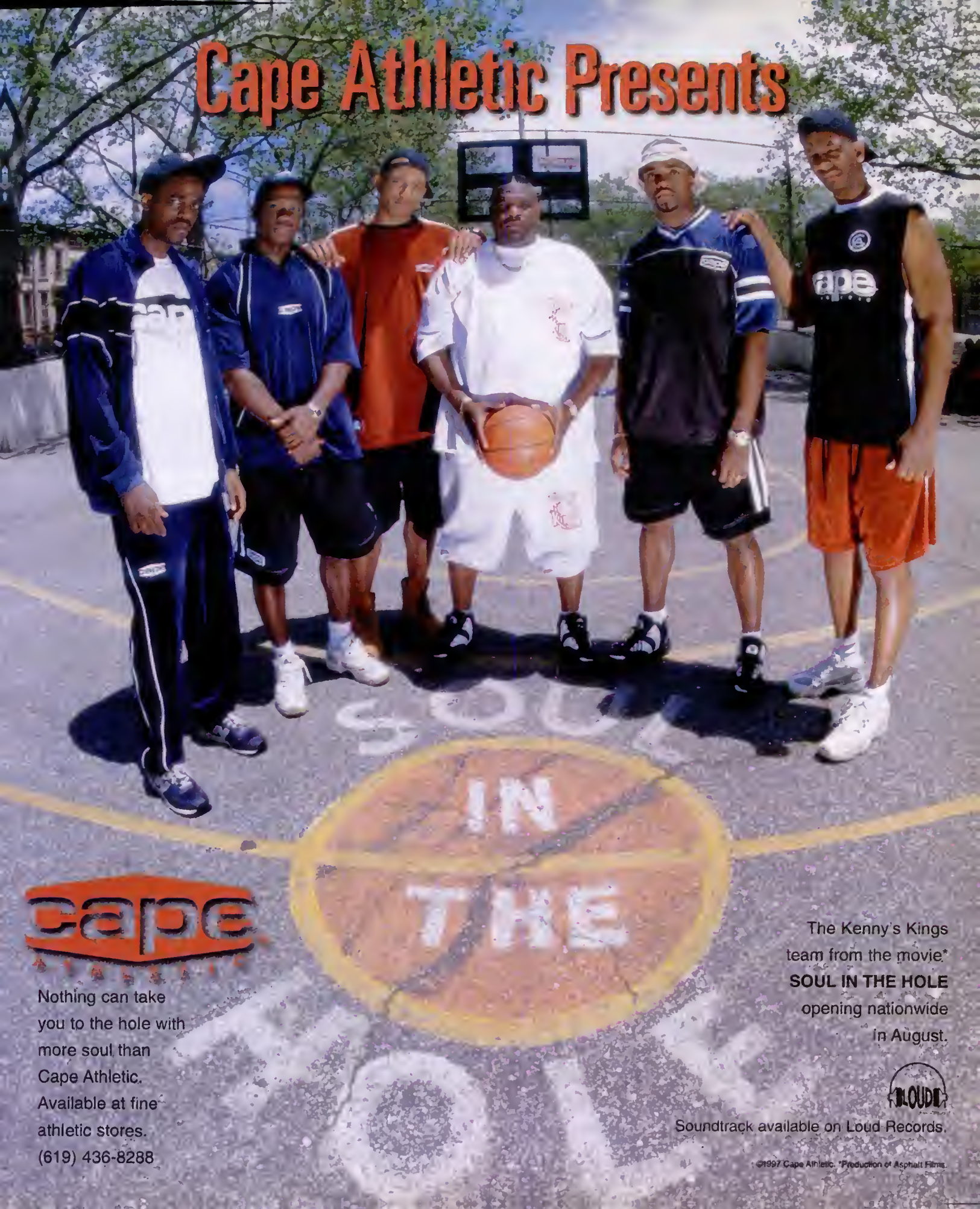
I would tell her to go with her gut. It's her choice. Not her doctor's, not nobody else's. We know the odds that three out of four kids will zero convert. If that 75 percent is forced, or their mother is forced, to take AZT, will they develop cancer down the line?

How do we give women the power to make good decisions about HIV, their own health, and their children's health?

Tell me what I need to know. I don't want my children to grow up with long-range health problems. The doctors' opinion is that the risks of AIDS infection outweigh the odds of cancer. Not to me it doesn't. And I'm speaking as a mom. These are my children, not theirs.

The day after this interview, Dawn learned that her youngest son had tested negative for HIV. ◘

POWER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PEOPLE ON THE VERGE

NICHOLAS PAYTON

Nick of time

When Nicholas Payton is about to perform—dolled up in a swank suit, wing tips, and a flamboyant necktie—some say he bears a striking resemblance to Louis Armstrong. When Payton's cheeks flare around the mouthpiece of his trumpet, others maintain he looks a smidgen like Dizzy Gillespie. And the late trumpet legend Doc Cheatham, with whom Payton toured and collaborated on the recent album *Doc Cheatham & Nicholas Payton*, often asserted that Payton's mannerisms reminded him of Satchmo's idol, King Oliver.

How does the mild-mannered New Orleans native deal with all these comparisons? "It means a lot that people think that much of me," Payton says humbly, "but I'm still in the process of finding myself." It's a slightly peculiar remark considering this 23 year old has already recorded two albums as a leader—1994's *From This Moment...* and 1996's *Gumbo Nouveau*—and has been playing since he was four.

Tonight at Washington, D.C.'s legendary jazz club Blues Alley, you'd never believe Payton has "so much to learn." When he points his horn at the audience to play his part of an up-tempo Monk tune, his power practically perms someone's Afro at a nearby table. When Cheatham—who passed away two days after this performance, at age 91—takes the stage for several slower, bluer pieces, Payton's melodic accompaniment pirouettes through the air like a sugarplum fairy.

It's remarkable that Payton already has developed such a distinct tone. He's more of a natural with his 1953 Mt. Vernon Bach than Robert Redford was with his baseball bat, Thunder Boy. But when pressed about his gift, Payton, who began playing professionally at age 11, pretends his youth is more of a curse than a blessing. "I had offers to record when I was fourteen," he says, "but I didn't want to be exploited for my age."

Payton's promising future includes a fourth album, due out this fall, featuring special guests Roy Hargrove, Joshua Redman, and Wynton and Branford Marsalis. But more important, he doesn't want anyone to be afraid of him or his music. "Jazz has been overintellectualized, and I want to kill all that," he says. "You don't have to have a degree in musicology to understand or enjoy it. If it moves you, tap your feet, clap your hands, shout, whatever."

OJ Lima

PHOTOGRAPH BY NEAL FRANCE

NEXT

AUDREY
Goodbye heartache

ZIGGY MARLEY AND THE MELODY MAKERS' "TOMORROW People" is blaring over the system of a Midtown Manhattan bistro as I try to chat up soft-spoken soprano Audrey. Admittedly, the Cleveland native is pleasant enough; but her timid, guarded responses—like her mournful, Minnie Riperton–like melodies—reveal that she has endured her fair share of heartache.

Within the past three years, 26-year-old Audrey lost both her mother and her sister to cancer—which led to a postponement of her music career. Although she says she isn't ready to document her grief, the tried-and-true themes of love and loss, joy and pain, and makeups to breakups she explores on her reflective, as-yet-untitled debut album are all the more poignant because of her tribulations. When Audrey triumphantly declares on "Putting Me Together" that she's "picking up the pieces," it's more than a man she's bemoaning.

"Music is the only thing I do where I can totally express myself. When you're performing, you go wherever your spirit takes you. When that happens, people feel it," says Audrey, who graduated from Howard University with a degree in music education.

During her hiatus, Audrey worked as a graphic designer for a Cleveland newspaper. But earlier this year, backstage at a New Edition concert, she bumped into old colleague Gerald Levert, whom she met initially several years ago, when she toured with and sang back-up vocals for Levert and his brothers on their 1993 album, *For Real Tho'*. Levert was looking for a female artist who could sing and play keyboards to join his new Global Soul label. Audrey, who's played piano since age six, fit the bill perfectly.

"I was really shy when I started working with Gerald," she says, "but I can hear how I'm really opening up, especially on the song 'It's Like That.' It's nice working with a producer I can vibe with."

But Audrey's newfound success is obviously bittersweet. "There's a song on the album I call 'The Baby Song,'" she says. "Before she passed, my sister heard it and said, 'Oh no, not another one of those [sappy] songs.' But I'm glad I included it. I never listened to my sister anyway. I guess I'm still not listening."

Tracey E. Hopkins

PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHARINA ORNE

twism

the world is mine

BELK'S

UP AGAINST THE WALL

MAISON BLANCHE

FINLEY QUAYE
On the seventh day...

NEXT

FINLEY QUAYE DOESN'T LIKE WORKING ON Sundays, especially when he's tired and fighting off a cold. This particular Sunday in June, Quaye is performing, along with Jamiroquai, Erykah Badu, and Morcheeba, among others, at the Finsbury Park festival in North London. Quaye is irritable because of the poor sound quality onstage ("We spent three days rehearsing with samples and computers," he complains. "In the end, you couldn't hear anything") and because of constantly being shuffled from interview to interview by his label publicists, all atwitter about their Next Big Thing.

The following day, after 13 hours of sleep and a triple brandy, the impish 23-year-old half-Ghanaian, half-Scottish singer/songwriter/musician admits he wasn't ready for all this attention. "Someone got hold of my demo, sent it to five labels, and all five came looking for me," he says in amazement. "One A&R guy literally waited outside where I was staying *all day*." And though his good fortune is many an aspiring artist's pipedream, Quaye sees it as somewhat of a struggle. "There's a lot of backwardness in capitalism, in business," he says. "I come from the people who suffer on the other end of that."

His debut album, *Maverick a Strike*, is a rich tapestry of sound and feeling that weaves rock, roots reggae, soul, and calypso with compassionate, often world-weary lyrics. "I'm into exposing what's right from wrong, based on my personal experience," he says.

This experience is that of an only child growing up parentless, who became a bohemian tumbleweed and traveled all over Europe and the States hanging out with "bank robbers, hippies, and jazz musicians." Recently, he found that one such musician, Tricky, the premillennium kid himself, also happens to be his nephew. (Quaye's late half sister was Tricky's mother).

And even though he's critical of the world's ways, Quaye's still an incurable romantic. Songs on *Maverick*, like "Your Love Gets Sweeter" and "It's Great When We're Together," celebrate passion and sensuality. "I don't hate nothin'," he announces, his azure eyes twinkling, "—but it's obvious what I love." *Andréa M. Duncan*

PHOTOGRAPH BY PHIL KNOTT

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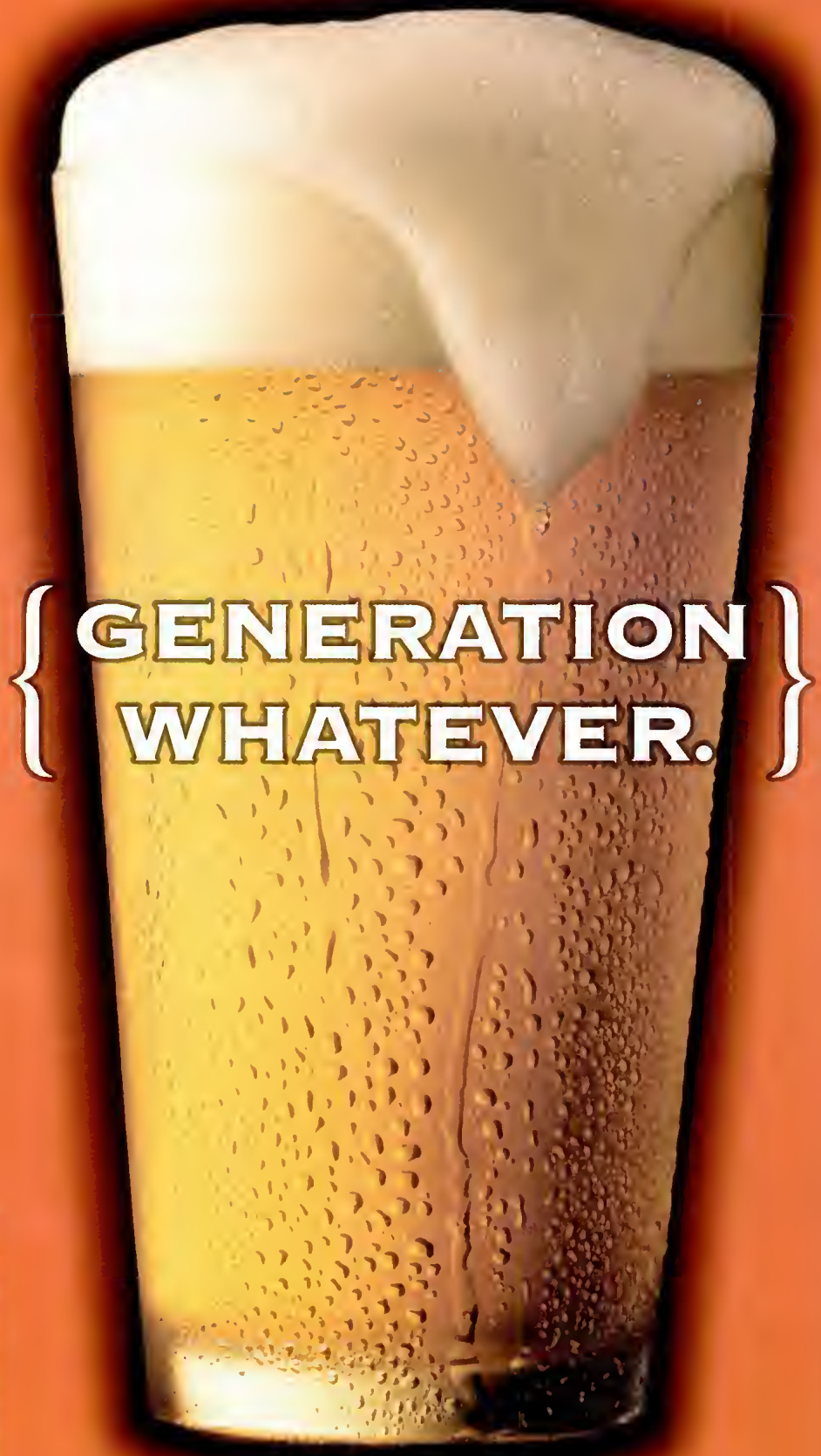

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NEXT

GOD'S PROPERTY
On higher ground

"GOD'S PROPERTY IS 'BOUT it, 'bout it," says choir director Robert Searight, who leads the 50 other 16–27 year olds in Kirk Franklin's new find. And they're setting records all over God's creation. Their self-titled first album took only one week to reach No. 1 on Billboard's Gospel and R&B charts and to hit No. 3 on the pop chart. The video, pumped up by Salt's (of Salt-N-Pepa) tight flow, is the first gospel video ever to play on MTV. "We're just a group of church kids who wanted to be hype, sing funky music, and minister," 21-year-old Searight says.

And God's Property ain't just 'bout Bankhead Bouncin'. Many of the musicians and singers were trained at the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, Texas, and have been choir members all of their lives. Rodrick Butler, 21, was in six different choirs simultaneously before finding GP. "I wanted to sing so much that any time a community choir was formed, I would jump in," he says. Like a few other members, Butler was escaping the drug and gang scene when GP came into his life.

Like the Bible advises, GP's youthful sound goes to the highways and hedges, using R&B, jazz, classical, traditional gospel, and yes, hip hop to get the message across. "We're the essence of outreach," says Robert's mother, Linda Searight, a schoolteacher and opera singer who founded the choir in 1992.

Noticing GP's skills at different local events, Fort Worth neighbor Franklin was so impressed that he enlisted the choir to sing background vocals on his 1996 gold second release, *Whatcha Lookin' 4*. Franklin produced and wrote all the songs on GP's album and was "the bomb" to work with, says 20-year-old Candy West. "He's got fifty brothers and sisters now."

These young folk may fear God, but they understand He's 'bout it too. "A lot of people are scared of the negativity and the criticism," says Tamryn Cornelius, a 20-year-old soprano. "God's Property ain't scared." Her advice to those who don't like their "radical" music: "Listen to the message. Once you hear the words, they'll touch your heart. And that's when we got you." *Joyce E. Davis*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID E.

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NEXT

CHRIS SPENCER

Step into the arena

TWO YEARS AGO, STAND-UP COMIC Chris Spencer could barely put together 89 cents for some McDonald's french fries. But now, it appears he's finished fishing for pennies between car seats: On August 4, Spencer will make his debut as host of *VIBE*, the Quincy Jones/David Salzman–produced late-night talk-show incarnation of *this* urban chronicle (check your local listings).

Our young man's vitals: six foot two, 190 pounds. Born in 1968 to Jamaican-immigrant parents, later separated. Raised in Inglewood and South Pasadena, Calif. with his mother and two older sisters. Bachelor of arts in theater from UCLA. A lover of golf and basketball. Single. An ordinary guy on the verge of extraordinary fame.

If Chris looks familiar, it's probably because he's had a Wayans brothers connection for most of his brief career. His film credits include *Low Down Dirty Shame*, *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the 'Hood*, and *The Sixth Man*. And most recently, Spencer cowrote, with Shawn Wayans and Suli McCullough, the deliciously snappy *150 Ways to Tell If You're Ghetto* (Dell).

"I started off writing for the Wayans," says Spencer, "and I wrote myself into their movies. We all did stand-up on the same circuit; so they always gave me the opportunity to make some money."

Not bad for a young comic. But going head-to-head, five nights a week, with Letterman, Leno, and his "bro" Keenen Wayans? Asked why he was chosen for such a high-pressure gig—the syndicated, hour-long show will be available in 97 percent of the country—Spencer answers earnestly: "I don't drink. But [if I did,] I could have a 40 with Dr. Dre in the morning, Cristal with George Bush that same afternoon, and still be the same Chris. Some people have urban appeal and some have crossover appeal. But in terms of both meshed together, I think that's where I won over. I've performed on the chitlin circuit as well as the roast-beef-quiche circuit."

Perhaps it's Spencer's playful confidence, more than anything, that's landed him in his cushy interviewer's chair. "I like talking to people. I'm nosy. I like nice clothes; they give me some free," he jokes. "I'm exactly where I want to be." Vibin'.

Kristal Brent Zook

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREGORY SCAFFIDI

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It's time to strengthen your attack.

Viral load testing, now available from your doctor, identifies the amount of active virus in your body — and is considered to be an important indicator of disease progression, together with CD4 T-cell counts. The best way to reduce the build-up of HIV is to maintain a low viral load.

CRIXIVAN significantly decreases viral load in many patients.

CRIXIVAN provides powerful HIV suppression through protease inhibition. In some patients, CRIXIVAN has lowered the amount of HIV in the bloodstream to levels undetectable by available testing. (Note: The clinical significance of changes in serum viral RNA measurements during treatment with CRIXIVAN has not been established. Also, the virus may still be present in other organ systems.)

CRIXIVAN also increases CD4 T-cell levels in many patients.

With less virus to repel, the immune system produces more disease fighting CD4 T-cells.

there's a change in outlook.

CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated and is currently the most widely prescribed* protease inhibitor medication.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN in clinical trials developed kidney stones. This occurred in about 4% of patients. Since CRIXIVAN has been marketed, other side effects have been reported, including rapid breakdown of red blood cells and kidney stones sometimes with kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of liquid each day may help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been associated with protease inhibition treatments. Also, there are some common medications and some AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Make sure your healthcare provider knows about all medications you are taking or plan to take.

Every day is an opportunity to fight back.

Educate yourself with knowledge about nutrition, fitness, and treatment developments that can help you lighten your load and manage the virus.

Important Considerations: CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection in adults when antiretroviral therapy is warranted. It is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Therefore, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. It is not yet known whether taking CRIXIVAN will extend your life or reduce your chances of getting other illnesses associated with HIV. Information about how well the drug works is available from clinical studies up to 24 weeks.

For additional information on CRIXIVAN, please read the patient package insert provided on the following page of this ad.

* IMS America: 3/96 - 4/97.

Remember to ask your doctor about CRIXIVAN.

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Patient Information about CRIXIVAN (KRIK-sih-van)
for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, you should read the information included with CRIXIVAN each time you receive your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this information does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of adults with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virue) when therapy is warranted. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a new type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. It may help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count.

CRIXIVAN may be prescribed alone. CRIXIVAN may also be prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor to see if you should take CRIXIVAN alone or with other anti-HIV drugs.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. It has not been studied in children and adolescents.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays." If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day*.** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:
   - dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim milk and sugar if you want)
   - corn flakes with skim milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example - a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **Drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquids (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN has caused kidney stones in some patients.** By having enough fluids in your body you may help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor.

It is not yet known whether taking CRIXIVAN will extend your life or reduce your chances of getting other illnesses associated with HIV. Information about how well the drug works is available from clinical studies up to 24 weeks.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor about:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?*

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)
HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)
HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)
isoniazid (INH)
DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)
BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust the dose of MYCOBUTIN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this page alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN in clinical studies developed kidney stones; this occurred in about 4% of patients. Drinking at least 6 glasses of liquid each day may help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

In clinical studies, side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Other side effects occurring in 0.5%-2% of patients in clinical studies included: sleepiness, fever, indigestion, excessive gas, muscle pain, leg pain, anxiety, depression, decreased skin sensation, itching, and painful or difficult urination.

Side effects occurring rarely, in less than 0.5% of patients in clinical studies, and also considered serious, included: gall bladder inflammation, liver cirrhosis, pneumonia, and swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow.

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: liver problems including liver failure; kidney stones sometimes with kidney failure, rapid breakdown of red blood cells; abdominal swelling; and change in skin color.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°F-86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication is prescribed for a particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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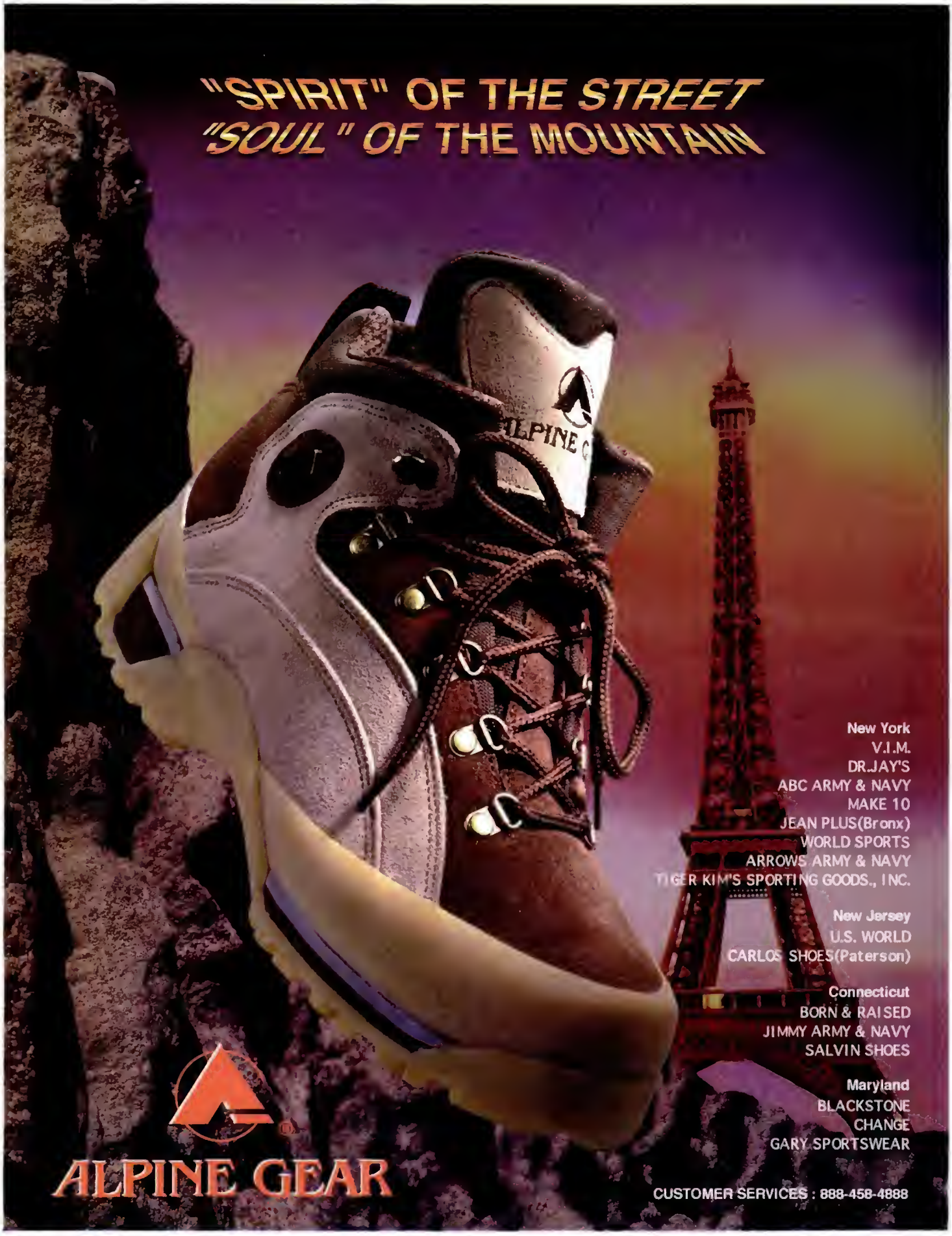
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juice

We asked a panel of players:

What is juice?

The W is juice.

RZA, the Rzarector

Sip on These

I remember when I used to imbibe this gritty carrot-orange-pineapple concoction my moms used to mix up back in the "President Carter is off once again to Camp David" days. I remember her telling me that it was good for me, that it would make me diesel—stuff like that. All I knew was, by lunchtime, this rickety brew smelled like hot-and-sour stool in my Buck Rogers thermos. And the juice pulp—all thick and rubberish—felt like dead roaches dancing on my tonsils. Believe me, fool, I used to dream about getting knocked out by a nice Hawaiian Punch.

Twenty years later, I find myself forever in fantasy mode, dreaming up marketing schemes for mommy's juice. To me, your average refrigerator looks like a sugar-walled, rainbow cash crop. Raspberry, coconut, asparagus—there's money to get got in the beverage game. But in the world of corporate-distributed fluids, one has to keep it movin'. This one hits us off with 20 percent more liquid; yet another comes through with fewer calories, or maybe a bold, new, fruit-colored logo. The goal is to be flavor of the month—every month.

And such is the life force of hip hop culture, one of the more fruitful orange groves known to humankind. While locked mike-deep in battle, the freestyling MC must reinvent himself—lyrically, instantly—to win over the ultracritical, hyperkinetic crowd and shatter the competition. That's juice right there—the energy and spirit that turns a pretender into a contender, the pluck that separates a pigeon from a condor. It's what distinguishes a McDonald's employee of the month, or a down-home media mogul like Oprah "Harpo" Winfrey. It's the divine chutzpah ensuring that when you talk, whether you're E.F. Hutton or Louis Farrakhan, people listen. It's that *shit*—the same thing that separates the Wu-Tang Clan from talent show runners-up. Yo, RZA, let's get this Wu-soda thing happening. We'll send Dr. Pepper back to the hospital! *Sacha Jenkins*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL HASTINGS

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RIGHT AND EXACT

The Wu-Tang Clan regroup, reflect, and return to tailor a new era in hip hop. Make way for the Wu World Order. ***By Mimi Valdés. Photographs by Daniel Hastings***

Juice is when you can get out of being ticketed because a police officer recognizes you.
Pepa, big kahuna

Juice is being able to floss on the East side in your six and not get "hit up" by any knuckleheads.
40 Thevz, Coolio's crew

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At an organic-food store next to his Razor Sharp headquarters in Manhattan, RZA picks up some hand soap, natural shampoo & conditioner, and a five-pound jar of something called Batherapy that promises to "change ordinary tub water into a refreshing, beneficial spa-like bath." He hops into a white Range Rover, readying for a one-and-a-half-hour drive to his home, affectionately named the Wu Mansion, although no one but he and his brother Divine actually lives there. It's situated in a remote area of central New Jersey on five lush acres of land, complete with cornfields and roads with rustic names like Deer Trail. The rest of Wu-Tang use the home as a clubhouse, sleeping over whenever they have to get work done in the tiny basement studio.

"Keeping it real four years ago and today is different," says RZA, the abbot and architect of Wu-Tang Clan, the most powerful force in hip hop today. "I'm not inspired by all that other shit from before—boosting Polo and Hilfiger all day. My life is different now."

Indeed, since his debut as Prince Rakeem in 1991, with a bevy of seductresses cooing in "We Love You Rakeem," his first video, you could say things have changed in RZA's life. Six years later, he's a major player on both entrepreneurial and artistic levels in the music biz, touted not just as a sonic visionary but also as one of the industry's best negotiators. RZA studied the game and rewrote the rules. Now, instead of *being* pimped, he's the Mack, having set up deals with almost every major label—a feat not accomplished since the mighty George Clinton did it in his heyday.

Under his shrewd, painstaking auspices, the nine grimy nuhs of Wu-Tang Clan have created an unprecedented business pyramid, built on a unique, impregnable foundation. All of the Wu's individual projects—specifically deals for Method Man (Def Jam), Ol' Dirty Bastard (Elektra), Raekwon (Loud/RCA), GZA (Geffen), and Ghostface Killah (Razor Sharp/Epic)—are 50 percent partnerships with Wu-Tang Productions. The Wu-Tang Clan familia, separately and collectively, have sold more than four-and-a-half-million records, and debut albums from Inspectah Deck, U-God, CappaDonna, and Shaolin chanteuse Tekeitha are in the chamber, awaiting release. Furthermore, each Wu member with a solo deal contributes 20 percent of his earnings to Wu-Tang Productions. This way, everyone profits. It's pure, communal capitalism at its finest.

What kind of power Wu got? Sales power. In the June 1997 issue of *Icon* magazine, RZA broke down their earnings like so: "Let's say Raekwon has a fourteen-percent deal, he gets fourteen points. A point is usually worth about seven cents. Estimate seven cents, multiply by fourteen if he's getting fourteen points, and that's ninety-eight cents. Maybe one dollar to $1.03." That translates to about a dollar per record. "So, say Raekwon sells eight hundred thousand records, that's eight hundred thousand dollars." And that percentage varies between Clan solo members and the group as a whole. "Like, Meth might have a fifteen-point deal. Wu-Tang Clan might have a seventeen-point deal. And it escalates. If you go gold, you get another point. You go platinum, you get another point. I got a deal right now with Gee Street. My shit is eighteen points. That's A-artist status."

"RZA is a master of planning. He bases all his decisions on the long term, never short term," says Def Jam's Russell Simmons, another self-made mogul. "His decisions represent a development for a real audience. He takes risks. It shows the foundation audience you are serious about them, reminds them that they're the ones who count, who you make the music for. Creatively, he's the most important person in hip hop because he reaffirms what the culture is all about." →

RZA's juice card is completely full—and he's not running out of credit anytime soon. In fact, since *Wu-Tang Forever*, the booming sophomore double album from the gods known as the Wu-Tang Clan, exceeded all expectations after its June release on Loud Records (selling more than 600,000 copies in its first week out), it's safe to say that the Wu World Order has been firmly established.

Wu-Tang Forever is exactly what Wu-Tang devotees, both Stateside and worldwide, expected and craved: rugged, symphonic, compelling hip hop. Two hours of beautiful noise for a populace so hungry for *real* music sustenance, it would eat CD covers. "Wu-Revolution" sets it off, a rambling rant that serves as an appetizer for the feast that follows on "Reunited." "For Heavens Sake" is pure, unadulterated Wu, complete with dramatic violin solos, sped-up sonic snippets, and, naturally, rhymes that don't quit.

RZA's pensive tracks take the Wu to other frontiers stylistically: Check "Bells of War," with its warm organ melody and easy thump, or the seductive guitar pluckings of "Black Shampoo," for proof positive. "Impossible" soars with its plaintive piano and Ghostface's haunting eyewitness account of the cold-blooded shooting of a friend: "He pointed to the charm on his neck / With his last bit of energy left / Told me 'Rock it with respect.' " Tekeitha's raw, uneven declarations ("You will never defeat the gods...impossible!") will have you believing like untainted scripture. And speaking of scripture, *Forever*'s packed with Wu's trademark coded verses extolling Five Percent Nation idioms. They beckon you to "have your third eye open." And you certainly should: You don't want to miss a thing.

As the Rover pulls into the driveway, I can see Ghostface doing dishes through the kitchen window. He's just finished cooking up a turkey-sausage and pasta dinner, which several Wu members and friends gobbled up with a quickness. The house itself doesn't have much furniture, but it does boast an elaborate chess set and table with two chairs, and a strange-looking palm tree.

Inside, there's a game room with two plush chairs, a small couch and a high-tech projection television with no screen that casts a huge, flawless image of Sony Playstation visuals onto the wall. Method Man, Inspectah Deck, U-God, and Masta Killa are playing VR Golf '97. "Fuck Tiger Woods," says Meth jokingly as he sinks a putt.

Clubhouse mode is always in effect around here. Time spent at the Wu Mansion is all about work and relaxation, which is increasingly hard to find these days. Needless to say, this spacious home represents a far different scenario from their project days at Staten Island's Park Hill and Stapleton.

"I feel like dealing with the business slowed me down more," Meth says, lounging luxuriantly on the sofa. "But there ain't nothing better than waking up in the morning and knowing you ain't doing anything illegal, that cops have no reason to fuck with you, and your rent is paid."

But handling fame can sometimes be just as daunting. "The hardest thing is no privacy. When you're used to being somebody that could just blend in, making that adjustment is not easy," continues Meth, who's known to don a mask and gloves—as he did for our cover—to shield himself from the public's ever-probing eye. "I'd rather just rhyme and make loot without anyone knowing me. I don't really mind the autographs, but I could do without feeling like I'm on display every time I go somewhere." With a dead-serious mug, he says he's gonna disappear in five years, like Michael Paré's brooding Eddie in *Eddie and the Cruisers*.

"But then there are those situations when you're just a regular nigga again. Like every time we get on them airplanes," Meth says. "Even if we sitting in first class, they still treat us like shit. The lady just kept walking by my dirty tray, like, seven times, but took everyone else's." It's during these times that an autograph request from a fan actually comes in handy.

"Going on the road is the best part," says U-God, looking away from the game's incessant twinkle. He came home from Bear Hill Penitentiary just in time to rhyme on two cuts of *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*, the Clan's million-plus-selling debut.

During two years on lockdown, U-God was shuttled between four different prisons in New York's state system. "Things, things, things," he says when asked what put him there. "No murder. No rape. No child molestation or anything weird like that."

Adjusting to the whirlwind of acclaim and activity was difficult at first, he claims, but now he looks forward to it. "From being a one-spot-all-your-life motherfucker to smoking the world's greenest shit in Amsterdam and having them roll out the red carpet in Japan is an awakening experience." At the mention of Japan, Meth starts rattling off some useful phrases in Japanese. "You hear that?" continues U-God. "He can do that because he traveled. Hearing that nigga talk Japanese, that makes me happy."

"This Wu thing came out of nowhere. It was a vision, but I don't know if all of us saw it going this far," says Inspectah Deck, who is arguably the one MC in the Clan who people sleep on the most. Bet on that to change when his solo debut gets released on Loud next year. "In the beginning I was just rhyming. I didn't know nothing about the business. I was just laying low in the cut trying to learn—royalties, points, everything.

"Nine sets of eyes and nine brains make a big difference in this motherfucker," Deck adds. "I'm in heaven right now. Why would I ever leave this shit?"

Ah yes, that magic number—nine. In the beginning of the Wu-Tang saga, much ado was made about the group's size—how they'd never make any money with so many members, or how they were bound to break up

once success infiltrated the Wu cipher. But as they've shown, they had it all figured out from the get-go. "We made history sticking together," says Deck. "They talking about how we gonna split the money, not thinking we gonna leave it in the pot and just build together."

Just like any successful conglomerate, the Wu-Tang Clan constantly strive to elevate their overall organization in every division: product development, production, performance. "We like NFL niggas," explains

Deck. "We look at the video tapes of our shows to find out what went wrong. We always study how we look, what we could do better, whether it's less talking between songs, changing the song order—anything to take this further, we with it."

One thing's for sure, I offer: Those Wu shows got *way* too many gods onstage. Heads nod in agreement. "It got to the point where you didn't know who was performing," says Meth. Are they maintaining that tradition this time around when they tour in September with Rage Against the Machine, though? "Oh no, no, no," Meth says, laughing. "We had millions of meetings about that shit, even right there before the show, like, 'Niggas, do not get on the stage. We ain't playin' that shit tonight.' But then a few would make their way, and the whole ruckus would start." Adds U-God: "Doing that kind of messed us up a little bit with the promoters."

Masta Killa, the latest official Wu member, knows a little something about ruckus. He invited some in late 1993 when he punched a writer whose favorable article in *RapPages* was accompanied by illustrations the Clan weren't thrilled with. "I had to sit back and learn from individuals who had knowledge in the game," says the new lyric swordsman. "I'm just happy to have a chance to shine in the light they gave me."

The hours have passed quickly; already it's nearly 4 a.m. Bodies stretch, the Playstation gets turned off, and Deck turns the TV channel to a late-night martial-arts flick. The others simply look around for pillows and blankets to scoop up, seeking spots on the floor to sleep on since the bedrooms upstairs are already taken. In the morning, boxed toothbrushes and little tubes of toothpaste are dug out for distribution among the overnighters.

About two weeks later, Genius, a.k.a. the GZA, walks into my house accompanied by a friend, and they're both amazed at the size of my cat, Loochie. After I assure the pair that Loo won't bite, GZA sits down at the dining room table to discuss his Clan kin and the upcoming record, which, at this point, the group hadn't begun recording. Even he, the man deemed as spiritual leader of the group, can't explain the Wu's significance in simple terms.

"Our songs, the slang—everything is mathematically put together like a puzzle," GZA says. "There's a significant science behind everything."

And it's this "significant science" that may explain their sometimes-contradictory stances. Like when RZA complains about R&B in hip hop then has girls singing (or something like singing) his hooks, or when he says hip hop ain't about fashion, even as new Wu Wear retail shops are opening. And what about their prounity, unified-black man talk, followed up by the blackened eye of a black male journalist? Whatever. Maybe it's some typical do-as-I-say-not-as-I do business. Maybe it's some god science we aren't supposed to understand until the new millennium. Guess as long as the tracks are banging and passionate, the skillful rhymes are there, no one cares if mere mortals can't comprehend their logic.

"We didn't know anything at first, but you learn more and more," GZA offers, stopping occasionally to make sure Loochie isn't lurking nearby. "We learned from trials and tribulations. We're still dealing with the same things, but we're making more moves. Everything else is still the same."

Genius is also the Wu warrior who has delved into the visual side of their music joyride. The 10 videos he's directed include his own for "Liquid Swords," Case's "I Gotcha," and DJ Muggs's "Third World." "Videos are transporting energy," he says. "You can say something, and you'll hear it, but then you're drawing your own picture." He makes it sound so easy. "It starts with a treatment, a vision, and then getting production to pull it off."

The recipe for this universally influential music ain't that complex either, according to GZA. "It's not organized with a structure. RZA will have a beat, and each individual decides whether they feel it or not," says GZA. "We work best under pressure. That's how we get the music done. But it's not pressure from the label. It comes from each other, telling the next man to come through to get on a track.

"We keep it tight, though," Genius guarantees. "The nine represent one."

Why is it impossible to get nine mofos in one spot at one time for one damn picture? It takes us nearly an hour, deep into the wee morning hours, to assemble the group on their own front lawn—and, mind you, everyone was present at Wu Mansion, with the exception of Ol' Dirty Bastard.

Ghostface Killah seems to be the only one, besides the photographer and me, who sees a problem with this helter-skelter photo-shoot scenario. "We try to keep each other on point, like, 'Why you late for shit, man?'

"I don't really mind the autographs, but I could do without feeling like I'm on display every time I go somewhere." With a dead-serious mug, Meth says he's gonna disappear in five years, like Michael Paré's brooding Eddie in *Eddie and the Cruisers*.

We was starving," he explains, in part to justify his brethren's nonchalance, "and when you start paying bills with no problem, it makes a nigga get lazy fast."

Can't say that for Ghost, though, whose tag-team lyric assaults with his Wonder Twin, Chef Raekwon, make for Wu-Tang Clan's most compelling verbal vistas. "The one thing about this whole thing is that it's a chance to be somebody," says Ghost with brutal candor. "To be recognized for something I do? That shit is peace right there."

As spiritual brothers and creative partners, Wu-Tang may operate with one mind, with one goal—but nine dudes moving in nine different directions is just that. Chaotic, maddening, and endlessly frustrating—for the label, the press, and, at times, for each other—when trying to complete an album as heavily anticipated as *Wu-Tang Forever*. To escape distractions, the Clan had to break for L.A. to bang it out in marathon studio sessions.

"The hardest thing is all this moving around," Raekwon says thoughtfully. "We have so many deals, the Wu album is a family reunion. It's like not seeing your brother like you used to when you were hungry." Like anything else, the master plan does take its toll.

Ask Rae and he'll tell you that the Clan are comprised of "slang doctors," practitioners of street poetry who "take you on an emotional roller-coaster ride through chambers that touch parts of your mentality and make you think in certain ways. It's the way of the gods." And they do move in unearthly, mysterious ways. Rae and Ghost, for instance, come with that do-or-die, Mafioso steelo, laced with humor, mysticism, and mind-blowing detail.

"No one can compare to Wu. Ain't another team gonna come around like this for about another twenty years," says Ghost, his handsome face wrinkled in seriousness. "We doing things like sending our people to college, looking for the loyal motherfuckers to go learn that trade and come home to work with the family. See, it's all about advancing."

Easily the wildest, most unpredictable member of the Wu family, Ol' Dirty Bastard—or Osirus, his most recent manifestation—is all about drama. Even the announcement of his name change during last September's "Day of Atonement" in the wake of Tupac Shakur's death came in an unexpected fashion: via a lean, somber ODB, his head shaven and his face awash with earnestness. Far cry from the bloodshot-eyed frantic fool who fell on his butt in his "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" clip.

After pursuing him for at least a month, I finally hook up with ODB outside Elektra's Midtown Manhattan offices. He'd just finished a meeting with CEO Sylvia Rhone, so we sit on some stone benches that are usually filled with lunching businesspeople. The night is cold and breezy. Dirty laughs each time a gust sweeps by, willfully defying the elements with wicked glee.

The perennial question that surfaces in any conversation about Ol' Dirty Bastard is whether the out-of-control MC is still in Wu-Tang, since he always seems to be missing from major Wu events. "I can never be out of Wu-Tang," he says. "We blood. I would've never been anything if it wasn't for Wu-Tang. I just be going off on my shit. Dirty just be missing in action, but it's all good. I just don't like doing the publicity stuff too much. All that extra shit is difficult for me. I'm the wrong motherfucker to be asking questions, because I don't give a fuck about all that shit."

As we know, life is sometimes problematic for Dirty. He did a stint last year on Rikers Island for violating probation on a charge of beating up a club bouncer. And, of course, episodes of his snatching whole stages from Doug E. Fresh and the Roots are legendary. "I don't like to see wack-ass niggas doin' a show. If they not doin' it right, I'm gonna show 'em how it's done," he says matter-of-factly. "I apologize for being like that, but that's me. It's something I'm trying to control." He blames his erratic behavior on alcohol. "I got Indian in me, and you can't give an Indian alcohol. Once Dirty get that shit in his system—that firewater—he get crazy."

Dirty's newfound concern for making life better can also explain his name change to Osirus, an Egyptian diety. "Chinese, white, black, blue, the alien kids in the sky, they all belong to me," he says, attributing the change to his desire to reflect a more positive attitude toward children. "I go to the schools in my area to talk, and when the kids call me Ol' Dirty, it makes me feel bad. I always tell them righteous things, but the mothers be looking at me funny 'cause of my name." True to form, he's even decided to divide his next solo album between the raunchy ODB and the wise, humble Osirus.

"I slack up a little bit, but you know what?" Dirty queries with a diabolical grin. "Now it's time to terrorize the world. If it wasn't for me, the world wouldn't be as fun."

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OWNED BY NOBODY

The VIBE Q: Oprah Winfrey. By Harry Allen

If there's one person in this world who can testify to the power of Oprah Gail Winfrey, it has to be Jan Karon. She wrote a book, *Out to Canaan*, that jumped onto the *New York Times* best-seller list last April. You know the drill: Oprah picks a title for her book club; significant portions of her 15–20 million daily viewers rush out to get it; stunned publishers watch sales go vertical. But here's the really bugged-out part: Oprah didn't pick *Out to Canaan*. Her pick was Sheri Reynolds's *The Rapture of Canaan*. The Winfrey-led march to the stores was so massive that people picking up the *wrong book* still put it in the Top 15.

As chairman of Harpo Entertainment Group, as well as host, star, and supervising producer of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Winfrey is the most successful woman ever to enter the field of television. Having won 25 Emmys, her talk show—the highest-rated in history—is seen almost everywhere on Earth that has an electrical outlet, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. An Academy Award–nominated actress for her turn as Sofia in 1985's *The Color Purple*, she will soon produce and star in an adaptation of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* under a new five-year motion-picture deal with Disney.

What has brought Winfrey her success, fame, and stupefying wealth—estimated at $415 million—is her gut, her solar-plexus sense of what makes riveting television. That and her willingness to live out her travails—battles with eating and sexual abuse—in front of millions of strangers while making them feel like friends.

At 43, she continues to take whatever risks go with her stated goal: "follow the truth." Fundamentalist Christians criticized her for her role in Ellen DeGeneres's "coming-out" episode. And after last year's "Dangerous Foods" show led to a plunge in cattle-futures prices, Texas ranchers hit her with a $6.7 million lawsuit.

I met her in Chicago, near the end of one of her famous 16-hour workdays, as her cocker spaniels, Sophie and Solomon, traipsed about Harpo's comfortable headquarters playing with squeeze toys. Her medium-size office, filled with pillows and done out in soft burgundy and cream, was deeply scented by the Casa Blanca lilies that filled one table. She answered every question—even the tough ones—with candor and grace.

Few people ever reach the rarefied atmosphere that you're in—and those who do often find there's not much air up there. How do you psychologically navigate the extreme realms of your business?

I'm a very simple person—a simple woman involved in a very complex business. The secret to my success and understanding how I navigate is understanding that I am grounded in a power that is greater than myself. Even as a little girl in Kosciusko, Mississippi I felt that my life was bigger than my surroundings. I remember helping to churn the butter and the smell of lye soap on the back porch, and crackling bread and all that. I remember looking through the screen and watching my grandmother boiling clothes in the big, black iron pot, and *knowing*, somewhere inside myself, that my life would not be that life. That my life is bigger than this.

Growing up between Mississippi and Milwaukee and Nashville, I became an orator, starting early in the Baptist churches and speaking Easter pieces and all of that from the age of three. That is where I developed my sense of value and self-worth, through speaking to audiences, reciting from the time I could speak. And I remember leaving Nashville to go to Baltimore—twenty-two years old—and speaking at a church. I was going to pack up and leave the next day, and I preached on the sermon of "I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future."

How did you develop your particular sense of spirituality?

I was raised fundamental Baptist, but over the years I've grown to understand that God isn't as narrow as I was raised to believe, that the world of God is in everything that is good. I feel a deep sense of connection to the spirit that is greater than myself. I don't do anything without consulting with that spirit, that power, that force—

How do you do this consultation?

It varies. Now I'm in the process of doing *Beloved*, and I actually say a prayer every morning to the power of God that is everything, and to the ancestors. I collect slave memorabilia—slave documents, bills of sale, and lists of ownership from slave masters. And, so every morning, I light a candle to the slaves and say out loud the name of one of them. Because my goal in doing this film is to honor the lives of those whose stories were never told. And to bring that to the screen with great truth, and a sense of honor and integrity that they would appreciate.

How materialistic are you?

That's not an easy question now, because I have so many material things. I remember in Baltimore when I used to walk around with a fake Rolex watch and a fake Louis Vuitton bag. I was twenty-two years old, and I thought that material things somehow created value for you as a person. But I never wanted to live beyond my means; so when I was making fifty thousand, I drove a Chevette because I could pay cash for it. And I remember speaking at schools to children, and kids would say, "How come you don't have no Benz?" And I would say, Well, for a Benz, I'd have to have a car note. But this I can afford.

I hate excessiveness. I hate toasting four pieces of bread if you really only needed three. I'm sitting at a hotel in New York, and I love the Four Seasons, but the guy brought me a cup of cappuccino and raisin toast, and the bill was $25.62! And I said to him, Yes, I can afford it—I mean, *please*, I'm in the largest suite at the Four Seasons—but you yourself know that this bill is too high.

You don't feel $25.62. It's not even an atom to you.

No. I don't feel $25.62, but I understand that it's too much to pay for a cup of coffee and a piece of toast. And that doesn't mean I wouldn't spend a million dollars on a painting that I really loved.

Do you buy a lot of art?

I do. I was introduced to art by Bill Cosby, who told me [*imitating his voice*], "One day, sis, you gon' get sick o' shoes!" Bill has been a great mentor. Sidney Poitier has been a great mentor for me, when I was going through difficult times, when black people were telling me my show wasn't black enough....

Has that stopped?

For the most part. I used to be really distraught about it because, no matter what you do, you can never do enough. And Sidney said to me, "It's because you're carrying people's dreams, and the expectation is so high."

Did you not understand that?

I came from a world of needing to please. You know, I'm a southern black girl. You try to do whatever you can to make everybody happy. I was in my late thirties, almost forty, before I realized I can't

Juice is power—and when you really have power, you don't have to talk about it.
Lela Rochon, screen gem

Juice is being able to tell a don from a [illegible] what hand he wears his pinky ring on.
Ambassador Bōnz Malone, consigliere

Juice is when your presence or the mere mention of your name can cause hearts to flutter, raise eyebrows, or effect change. The trick to having juice is to realize that it is a responsibility and an honor. Misuse it, and your juice might dry up!!
Kim Coles, sister Living Single

please everybody.

And I broke all the rules. I wasn't thin. I wasn't light-skinned. I didn't have a thin nose or thin lips. Nobody could explain how I got to where I was. They knew damn well I didn't sleep my way there! And all I did was talk! I didn't sing, I didn't play basketball, I didn't fit anybody's stereotype. Coming into Chicago in 1984, overweight with a Jheri curl, I was as shocked as everybody else that I'd gotten the job. And so it caused people to look inside themselves and say, "If she did that, what does that say about me?" All resentment, all jealousy, is based upon "What does this mean for me?"

It was very hard in the beginning. And I used to apologize for it in many ways. I think I held onto the weight as an apology to people. But then I realized that I'm owned by nobody. I'm only God's child.

[Phone rings. It's a call from her best friend, Gayle King]

What's the Gayle connection?

She's worked in television as long as I have. I was twenty-two; she was twenty-two. She was a production assistant; I was an anchorwoman. There was a snowstorm one night, and she couldn't get home. I said, You can stay at my house, and she said, "I don't have any underwear," and I said, Mine are clean. You can wear a pair of mine. And that was it. Stayed up all night talking, went to Casual Corner the next day, bought two sweaters, $19.99. She was like, "Awesome! You can buy two and not think about it?" Oh yeah, baby, 'cause [*snaps fingers*] I'm making twenty-eight thousand! [*Laughs*] It was fabulous. We've been best friends ever since.

One of my favorite Gayle stories is...last year we were in Florida, and we're going to the mall for my birthday, and we passed a car store. I said to the driver, Stop this car now. We both got out, and we looked at this car, which was a Bentley Azure. Convertible. Black. Cream interior. So we walked into the place and bought it.

The car cost $329,000, and Gayle's saying, "We gotta get it for three!" And I go, Gayle, really, is it gonna make any difference? This was a Casual Corner moment, only transferred to a Bentley.

Does it feel different to drive a Bentley? Is it nicer than your Chevette?

I never go anywhere. Go to the store, get some peaches. I've had the car now a year and a half and I don't have a thousand miles on it yet. I'll tell you what really is fun. When me and Stedman [Graham, her "permanent fiancee"] and the dogs are in it and the top's down. And I'm wearing my Tina Turner wig, holding on to make sure it doesn't come off! *That* is a cool thing—the whole idea of it.

You mean, "This is outrageous, I can't believe this"?

Well, what's outrageous—sometimes, when I'm flying in my G4—

That's your Gulfstream jet, right? How much does that plane cost?

I'm not gonna discuss *that!* Jet etiquette means you never discuss how much the plane costs.

Jet etiquette? [Laughs] Okay, now I know.

But sometimes—and I get a kick out of this—there's all black people on the plane. Just the other day, the flight attendant was passing out some lobster, and I said, We still black! It's not like we turned white! We still black, y'all! Oprah's still black! It's like, who knew?

Do you understand the effect of stories like these? You're the richest black person in the universe.

Am I? Let me think....

Except for Mobutu, but he got all his money from the CIA!

Oh, God, I never thought about that.

Come on—really?

I always think of other people as being rich. It's not a concept that I'm attuned to.

A lot of black people wonder why black people as wealthy as yourself don't centralize wealth. Why don't Bill Cosby and Oprah and Prince and Eddie Murphy and all those other people get together?

Because we are individuals. And I think the expectation shouldn't be any greater for what I do with my money than what you ask Donald Trump to do with his. Certainly economics is a major part of what everyone needs to survive. But what we need is to change the way we think about ourselves. That is true for both the African-American culture specifically and for humankind generally. Human beings don't understand that we are just spirit in the body—I see that as the number-one problem facing the world.

Nobody could explain how I got to where I was. Coming into Chicago in 1984, overweight with a Jheri curl, I was as shocked as everybody else that I'd gotten the job.

Spirit in the body? There are people who would say, "She's talking around the very real fact of what money can do."

My goal is to do what I can to change the way people think about their lives, so that they can hold the highest, grandest vision for themselves. I believe the way to do that is through education. And not just teaching memorization skills, but teaching people how to *think*. I'm getting ready to combine my forces with the organization A Better Chance. They find black children in the sixth grade—who *want* to make it—and place them in college-prep schools around the country. Ninety-nine percent graduate from college.

Do you feel any pressure to "give back"?

I feel no pressure; I feel no guilt. If you look back through any journal that I've written for the past fifteen years, my constant prayer is for the power that I call God, all that is God, to use me. Use me. I don't think you can do any better than that.

Long before I made a stand three years ago about taking the high road, I have been concerned about the images that were portrayed and presented through the media. That's why it was so hard for me to be a news reporter. If I'd go to cover a black person's home that had burned down, and a woman would be standing outside, rollers in her hair, crying, I'd ask her to go change her hair.

Some people would say that's a petty concern. I mean, if your house has burned down...

No, it's not a petty concern. The reason racism is so prevalent in this country is because of the images that are presented on a daily basis throughout the media. They think we can't talk, we can't speak; a lot of people think we're not feeling, thinking, emotional, caring human beings.

So, to the criticism that I used to receive about my not doing enough for black folks, I'd say, You don't understand how it works. If I do a show on parents concerned about their kids, and on that panel we have a black father, we don't say, "Here is a black man who cares about his child." But you put him in the same arena with other people who are also portrayed as loving, caring parents.

You humanize and normalize them.

And that is why racism exists—because the slave master was allowed to dehumanize us. To make us less human, less feeling, less caring, less than they were. It is the humanization that breaks down barriers.

Do you remember your interview with Frank Perdue?

That is not true, that Frank Perdue called me a baboon or something. That's one of those urban myths. I did say to him, You know, you kinda look like your chickens. And then the urban myth became that he told me, "Well, you look like a gorilla." That is not true. It's also not true that Liz Clairborne came on the show and said anything about black women's behinds, nor is it true that Tommy Hilfiger came on the show and said if he'd known black people were going to buy his clothes, he wouldn't've made them—all urban myths.

You've been very open about your experiences with child abuse. But a lot of black people thank their grandmothers for putting the lash to their behinds.

I don't understand why black people can't let that go, since that's absolute learned behavior from the slave master. We were beaten until we think that's the answer! But we didn't like it from the slave master, and our children don't like it any more from us. My girlfriend Gayle was never hit in her whole life. Black as she wanna be. Her whole family, never hit—most shocking thing I ever heard!

Me too.

And I'm, like, How did you turn out to be a decent person if nobody beat you? You really should be asking the opposite question: How did you manage to maintain any sense of self-esteem and manage to be such a good person when you were treated so violently as a child? You cannot tell me that being beaten every day is going to help you. It does not! Cannot!

Oprah, the look in your eyes has changed as you're talking about this.

Well, it's upsetting to me that people can't see that nothing good comes from violence. Just because we've had millions of wars doesn't mean it was right!

Were you proud when you heard that the beef market bottomed out after you did your show on dangerous foods?

Neither proud nor not. I was only asking questions. Neither proud nor not.

WE WILL SURVIVE
"The thing that's so remarkable about Tina is that you know her history, and you know she came out of it okay," says Oprah. "It makes you want to dance."

Did you go, like, "Wow!" at your effect? It's kind of like watching a mushroom cloud recede from you at its epicenter.

I'm always surprised at stories of our influence. I don't do anything for effect. The book club was the purest example of just doing something that I felt was truthful. I said, I'm gonna do it because it's my show, and I think it would be a good thing for some people, because I know what books have done for me. I've never felt that there was anything I could not do because of the color of my skin or because I was a woman. Because I read about women, black women, strong people like Sojourner Truth, who had done it.

The book club has been one of my greatest lessons this year. Because it means one thing to the outside world, and it means something completely different to me. To the outside world it's, Oh, you're selling books and the books you mention make Number One. To me, it says you can take a little idea that means something to you and it can become something great.

On a recent show you were speaking with a psychiatrist about playing music for your child and how it stimulates the brain. And you said, "I think rap music might cause brain damage."

I probably should have thought more about that; it really was personal. I don't listen to a lot of rap music, because it really does not cause me to feel a sense of calmness or to feel particularly inspired. I love all different kinds of music. I listen to all of Quincy's tapes, and I love Paul Simon, James Taylor. I love my old Supremes; but I'm not particularly stimulated by rap....Now, don't have all the rappers mad at me. I like L.L. Cool J, but he's not considered rap anymore, is he?

Sure he is—L.L.? *He's just not* center *anymore. There are a lot more newer, angrier voices and approaches.*

No, no. I'm not that angry. But I accept the fact....

I mean, there're the Fugees, for example.

I've got the Fugees' album. I like the Fugees. Lauryn Hill was almost my daughter in *Beloved*. She was gonna be the daughter, then she called and said she was pregnant.

You said "The drums of Africa still beat in my heart." But somehow I don't get the sense that all those midwestern white women in the audience are feeling those drums of Africa. Is there a discontinuity there?

Actually, those are Sojourner's words—but what do you want me to do, go on the air every day and speak to what I feel about every issue? What I feel about how children are treated in this country? What I feel about the way women allow themselves to be treated in this country? I feel a lot of things, very deeply, that I don't express every day on the air. And because I work in my own way to help change them, doesn't mean there's any discontinuity if I'm doing a show about fashion or whatever else. What you see on the air is just one dimension of my life. That isn't the full expression of who I am.

Could there be a race equivalent of the book club? A way of handling race?

I've tried everything and will keep trying. How do you bring together the racial divide? What's the best way?

SOTHEBY'S N.Y.C.

OPRAH'S PRIZED PICTURE
"The painting that means the most to me is a painting done by Harry Roseland, in 1904, called *To the Highest Bidder*. It hangs in my living room to remind me of who I am and how far I had to go."

I think the image of you standing next to an aquarium half-filled with marbles—and pulling out one black marble and saying, "This is how much genetic material is responsible for race, or skin color"—that should be in the Smithsonian.

The marble was good. In the early days, we did the brown-eyed/blue-eyed experiments, those were good. But recently, during the Mark Fuhrman show, I said on the air that Mark Fuhrman was not an aberration to black people, and got the worst hate mail of my career.

While discussing this with a member of your audience, you said, "If I go any further, I'm gonna get in trouble."

What I meant by that is, people are *so* uneducated—that it is so *easy* to have *anything* you say be misinterpreted and not understood, because the racial divide is *so* great. You should see the mail I got after that show. *Vile* things, like, "That's the reason God hasn't given you children, so you can't spread your racist hatred."

Do you have any regrets?

I regret having talked about Stedman in the beginning. That was unfair, for me to pull him into the public life without asking him first.

You're at a restaurant and you overhear someone order the "Oprah Winfrey." What does the waiter bring out?

Mm-mm-mm. It's, um...[*voice dreamy*] some mashed potatahs, and it's some smothered chicken. Maya Angelou made it. 'Cause she dun't just smother the chicken, she suffocates the bird. It's some okra on the plate. It's some turnip greens with spicy cha-cha pickles. It's corn bread, very thin crus'. [*Smacks lips*] It's, uh, sweet potatahs with marshmallows in it. It's some ice tea [*laughs*], not a whole lot of sugar, but it's like, half lemon, half ice tea. And that's what the "Oprah Winfrey" is.

And you eat it with your fingers?

Nope, not with your fingers.

What do you consider holy?

Oh...*great* question. I'm gonna write that down. That's a good question to remember to ask somebody—"What do you consider holy?" *Mmm. Great* question. [*Clicks silver Bulgari pen cap, rips off page of paper*] All that is good.

I keep a journal every day to honor that which I consider holy. To honor the holy moments, the *things* that bring holiness to me. On any given day, that can be the perfectly smothered chicken and the memories that that conjures. Or it can be sitting in complete silence in the grass with my dogs. Or walking through the woods with Stedman, or really *seeing* the moon. Or having somebody hold the door for me, and me saying thank you, and having that moment of human connect. Or sitting with Toni Morrison, talking about slavery and what it meant—*really* what it meant. And understanding where I've come from, and that I have been carried—*been carried*—by the spirits of those who've come before. And that my life is a continuance of theirs. And understanding that my life is bigger than my own, that it doesn't just belong to me. I consider that very holy.

Over the past few years you've talked about the possibility of ending the show, as though you're looking for new challenges. Even Alexander the Great stopped and cried because there was no more world left to conquer.

Oh, I don't feel that at all. There's so much more. The other day one of my producers was saying, "Maybe this is the end. Maybe these were the glory days and this was a great twelve years." And I said, Maybe it's the beginning. If you had asked me ten years ago to define what this *Oprah Winfrey Show* would become, I could not have told you. I have a certain instinct about doing what is right for me at a particular time. When we did *The Color Purple*, Steven Spielberg said, "Baby, your future's so bright it burns my eyes." So I kinda took that on as a part of my own belief—that the future's so bright it burns my eyes.

And one of the reasons I feel moved to question what comes next for me is because our history has shown that we owned nothing. We had nothing. We were able to maintain nothing. And so, when you reach a point in your life—black woman born *colored* in Mississippi who has acquired all of this—I ask, Was it just to have *shoes*? Certainly not. Certainly not. I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.

Why are you powerful?

That's a tough question for me because I don't see power the same way other people see power. I understand the perception, if you have money and planes and homes and stuff....I think that I am powerful to the degree that I have maintained my truth, and allowed that truth to influence other people for the good.

One of the most incredible stories I ever heard was from a black woman who.... You know, when I lost all the weight, I sold all my clothes; four-hundred-dollar pairs of shoes I sold for five dollars and gave the money to charity. I used a hotel. Big grand ballroom thing. *So* many clothes. And after a show one day, this woman in the audience said to me, "I came to your sale and I couldn't afford anything but a pair of shoes. I'm a size seven and a half, and you're a size ten. And I've been through some difficult times this year," she says. "My husband left me; I'm trying to raise my kids; and there are lots of times when I think that I can't make it. And when I think *I can't make it*—[*she turns her face upwards, closing her eyes, and a tear falls slowly down her cheek*] I go in the closet and I stand in your shoes. [*Barely audible*] And I believe that I can."

When those words came out of her lips, what was your reaction?

I embraced her and I said, That is the best thing I have heard in my life. I would like that on my tombstone.

That, to me, is what power is: somebody seeing my life, and seeing that here are obstacles that I have overcome, and seeing the truth, that "because you did it, I can too."

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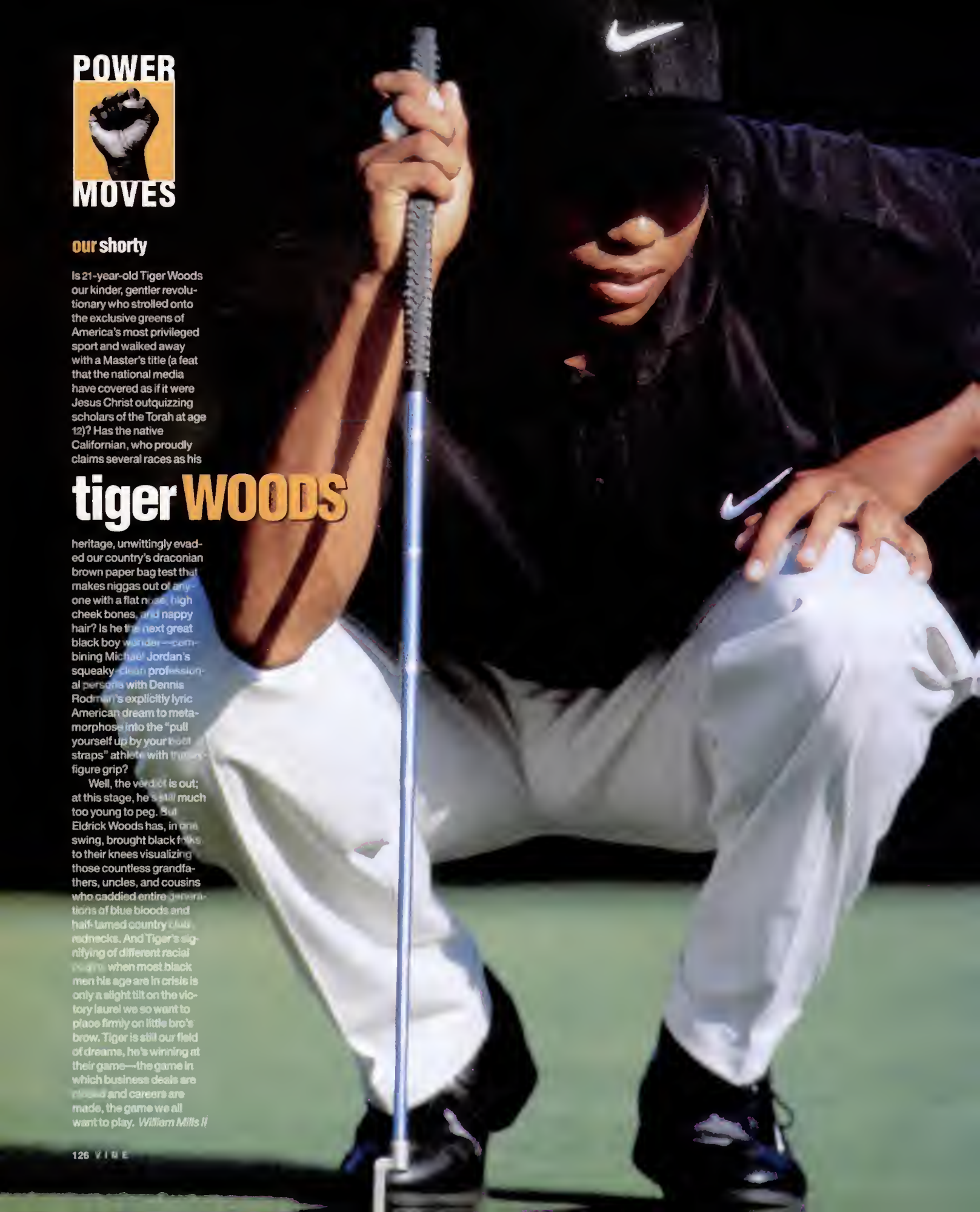
POWER MOVES

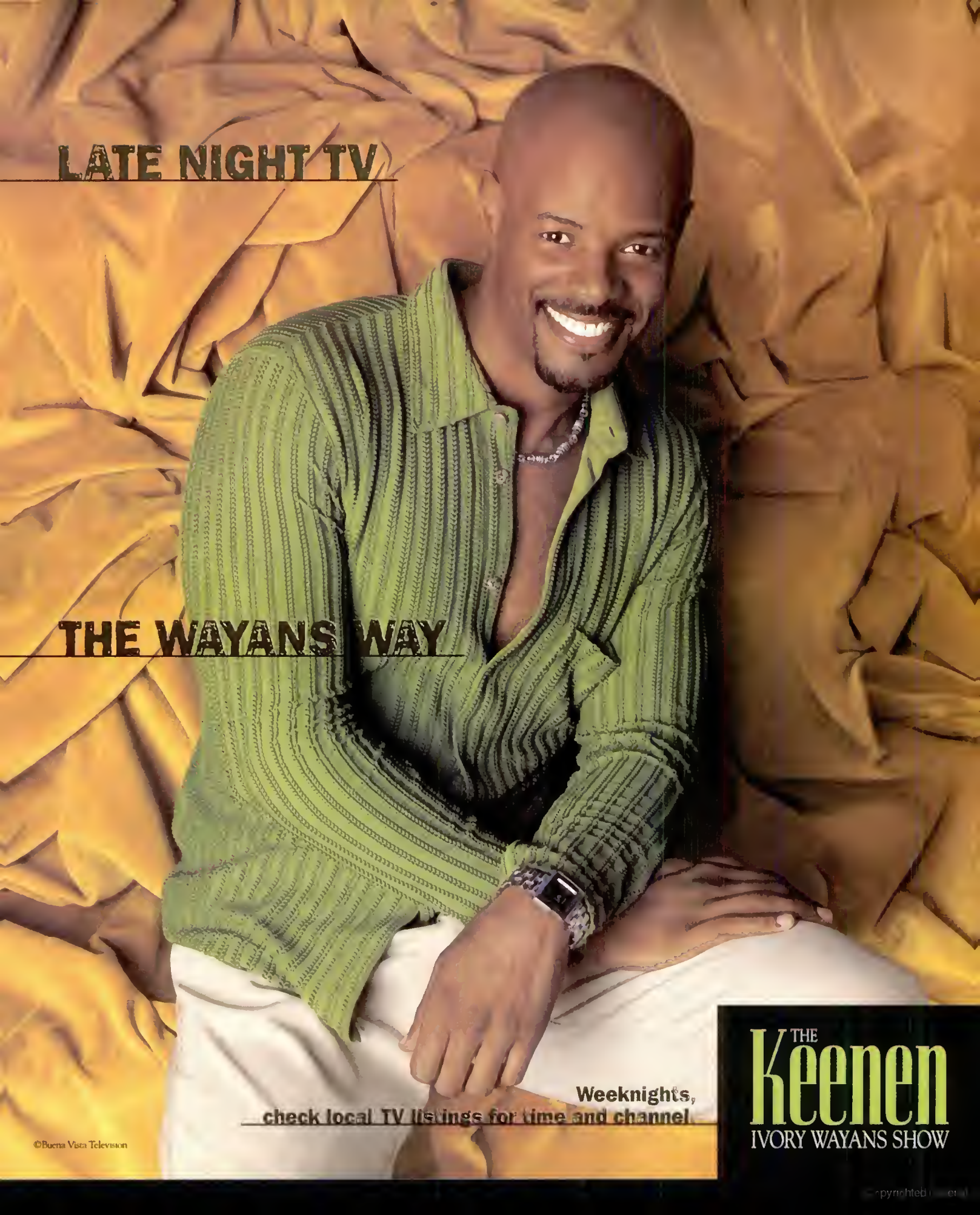
our shorty

tiger WOODS

Is 21-year-old Tiger Woods our kinder, gentler revolutionary who strolled onto the exclusive greens of America's most privileged sport and walked away with a Master's title (a feat that the national media have covered as if it were Jesus Christ outquizzing scholars of the Torah at age 12)? Has the native Californian, who proudly claims several races as his heritage, unwittingly evaded our country's draconian brown paper bag test that makes niggas out of anyone with a flat nose, high cheek bones, and nappy hair? Is he the next great black boy wonder—combining Michael Jordan's squeaky-clean professional persona with Dennis Rodman's explicitly lyric American dream to metamorphose into the "pull yourself up by your boot straps" athlete with thirty-figure grip?

Well, the verdict is out; at this stage, he's still much too young to peg. But Eldrick Woods has, in one swing, brought black folks to their knees visualizing those countless grandfathers, uncles, and cousins who caddied entire generations of blue bloods and half-tamed country club rednecks. And Tiger's signifying of different racial [illegible] when most black men his age are in crisis is only a slight tilt on the victory laurel we so want to place firmly on little bro's brow. Tiger is still our field of dreams, he's winning at their game—the game in which business deals are closed and careers are made, the game we all want to play. *William Mills II*

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CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARDS

Juice, that which separates the men from the boys. Not everyone is born with juice, nor can it be obtained at breakfast time.
Crime Boss, rapscallion

From left to right:

Tone, Track Masters

Ski, Roc-a-Blok

Salaam Remi

Havoc, Mobb Deep

DJ Evil Dee, Beatminerz

Ali Shaheed Muhammad, the Ummah

Mr. Walt, Beatminerz

Poke, Track Masters

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN MANNION

Liken them to sorcerers, for they spin webs of sound that make magic. Consider this: With such machinery as turntables, mixers, and sequencers, these hit men evoke profound emotions. They let us ride, bid us fight, command we make love, rejoice, mourn. These producers fill our empty spaces with samples that, when freaked accordingly, reveal the connectedness of all genres of music. Journeying from all walks of the Black American Experience, these are the minds behind the platinum tracks. So don't cry, it's only the rhythm.

Malik Pendleton

Patrick "Sleepy" Brown, Organized Noize

Q-Tip, the Ummah

CMT

Jay [illegible] the Ummah

E-A-Ski

K.T., Rok-a-Blok

Ray Murray, Organized Noize

Rico Wade, Organized Noize

POWER MOVES

one hundred degrees and still rising

tyra BANKS

It's not easy to dismiss the overwhelming presence of supermodel Tyra Banks. By becoming the first African-American woman to appear on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*'s Swim suit issue, by receiving the fashion industry's Supermodel of the Year Michael Award, and by snagging a cosmetics contract—a model's most sought-after, lucrative payoff—with Cover Girl, Tyra, 23, has become a force to be reckoned with in an industry often dismissed for its biases. Okay, she's got the prerequisite long hair and light eyes, and yeah, she's frequently shown in little more than a bikini; but as much as you might want to knock her hustle, the fact is, Tyra is one of the most successful black models ever.

There was a time in this country when black women weren't allowed the luxury of being glamorous. While Beverley Johnson, Iman, and Naomi Campbell kicked open the door, Banks, with her "crossover" appeal, has achieved more prominence in a shorter time span than any of her predecessors. Her success is evidence that traditional standards of beauty are truly under siege. As sis struts down the runway with fierce determination, confidence, and soul, she dares anyone to tell her she's not beautiful. It's that pride—more than the hair, eyes, and bikinis—that is the real appeal of Tyra Banks. And that's what keeps us transfixed. *Andréa M. Duncan*

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It's walking into a room and having every head turn without having to do or say anything.
Eartha Kitt, Her Fierceness

My definition of juice has nothing to do with social status. Having juice from my point of view means achieving inner peace.
F. Gary Gray, moviemaker

Juice is the power to be in control of your gifts and of the business of your gifts.
Abiodun Oyewole, Last Poet

THE CHARMER

THE VIBE Q: Minister Louis Farrakhan goes head-to-head with *Farai Chideya* in a point-blank discussion on race, religion, power, and hip hop

He's been called a savior, an anti-Semite, a demagogue, a prophet—and by some critics, just plain evil. Born Louis Eugene Walcott in the Bronx, in 1933, he became a calypso singer called "the Charmer" before devoting his life to the Nation of Islam, in 1955, and moving to the top of its ranks. A generation later, Minister Louis Farrakhan is arguably the most powerful and charismatic leader within America's black community.

His 1995 Million Man March drew black men from around the country and from all walks of life—ex-cons, teachers, students, businessmen. He preaches black economic self-sufficiency and has helped lead the Nation of Islam into scores of successful business ventures. In May he convened a group of rap artists—including Ice Cube and Chuck D—in an attempt to squash bicoastal beef and start healing the wounds dividing the Hip Hop Nation. But Farrakhan most often makes the headlines for his controversial comments on race and religion, as when he called Judaism a "dirty religion," in 1984, or suggested, in a recent TV appearance, that Jews had funded the Holocaust. He's been described by one conservative as the best hope for leading blacks into the Republican Party and, by at least one black civil rights leader, as the equivalent of David Duke. It's hard to find a more complex, more loved, or more hated figure in contemporary American society.

The leader of the Nation of Islam makes his home in the ornate, Islamic-themed Chicago mansion formerly occupied by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, who led the Nation of Islam from 1934 until 1975. On the day we meet, he is attired stylishly but casually in an African-print shirt and slacks, and looks far younger than his six decades on the planet should allow. We sit at one end of an immense marble dining room table; nearby are a few associates and his son Mustafa, who wears hip hop gear emblazoned with the words "Shabazz Brothers." Despite a hectic schedule that often leaves him exhausted (he uses acupuncture to boost his energy), Minister Farrakhan ends up allotting three and a half hours for the interview. He often speaks before audiences of thousands, but he uses the same techniques on this audience of one—alternately cajoling and criticizing (including questioning my independence as an interviewer), pouring on the verbal honey and the vinegar. Always in control, he is a master performer—but one who speaks from the depths of his conviction, no matter who likes it.

What's the one thing you've done that makes you most proud?

The proudest moment of my life was when I decided by the grace of God to submit my will to do God's will. And to give the total weight of my time, talent, and energy to the rise of black people into moral, spiritual, intellectual, economic, and political excellence.

Describe the vision that sealed your decision to end your life as a professional musician and devote yourself to the Nation of Islam.

When I was asked, through Malcolm X, by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to choose between my music career and my love for Islam, it only took a matter of five minutes—or less—to decide to give up my music. But I had thirty days to make the decision. So this particular night I was performing in what is called the Borscht Belt in upstate New York, and I decided that I would give the full range of my gifts and get it out of my system. I played the classical violin, jazz violin; sang ballads, calypso, blues; danced, told jokes. Pearl Bailey's manager was in the audience, and at the end of the night he came and offered me five hundred dollars a week, which was a lot of money at that time. I was supposed to meet him and a lawyer the following day to sign a contract.

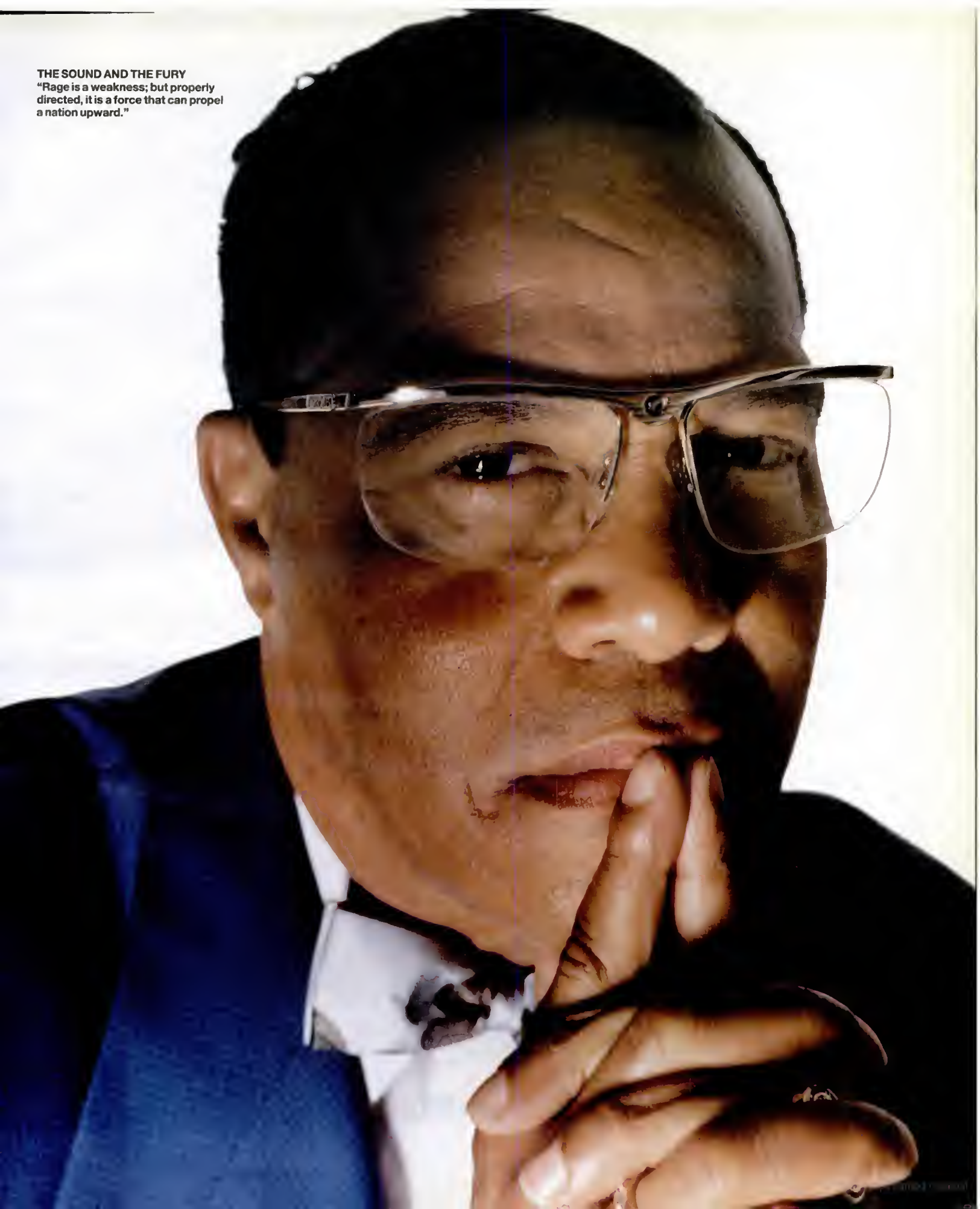
That night I had this dream, or experience, where I saw two doors. Through one door, which I could see clearly into, was a mound of gold, and over the door was written SUCCESS. The other door was titled ISLAM, and it had a black veil over it. And in this dream, or experience, I chose to follow the door of Islam, though I knew not where that door would ultimately take me. Forty-two years later, here I am, by the grace of God, where I never thought I would ever be. And the lesson I learned is: Whatever you give up for God, you never lose.

Some politicians and critics see rap as the most evil form of music in America. What's your view?

It is the mode of expression of the most marvelous generation that we have ever produced. This is the generation of fulfillment of the hopes and dreams and aspirations of a suffering people. They are strong, they are bold, they are fearless—and yet vulnerable because of a lack of guidance. Our youth have become an organized force, and at this present moment, in many cases, that force is destructive. But that force can also be constructive.

Rage is a weakness; but properly directed, it is a force that can propel a nation upward. America has always made greater advancement whenever she could provide the American people with an object of rage: Hitler, Mussolini, Hirohito, the Kaiser in World War One, the Cold War with Russia; and now there's an attempt to make Iran, Libya, Iraq, China, Cuba the world's bogey-

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW WILLIAMS



THE SOUND AND THE FURY
"Rage is a weakness; but properly directed, it is a force that can propel a nation upward."

men. When you channel anger into a force to bring about change, that can take a negative thing and turn it into something positive.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad was a master at this technique. He made us angry at white people for the evils that their fathers had heaped upon us, but he never allowed that anger to manifest itself in antisocial behavior. He turned that anger into a force for self-correction and self-development. He turned that rage on alcohol, on drugs, on illicit sex, on the buffoonery and clowning that we had become accustomed to seeing, and he forced us through this anger to become impassioned over learning.

What are your plans with the hip hop community?

We wanted to put together a tour of East-West artists, traveling on both coasts and in the center of the country. This can bode well not only for the youth of the black community but the youth of the Hispanic, the Asian, and the white community as well, because the characteristics of young people today are universally the same in terms of their anger, their frustration, their rage and disappointment with their leadership.

We hope to get the youth together to put out an album which speaks to the peace that they have embraced. We're not expecting them to become gospel hip hoppers; all we're saying is let's promote that which inspires a people to higher consciousness and actions. I have great-grandchildren that can recite the raps. I can't even decipher the words, the brothers are talking so fast; but the children, they got it at three and four years old. If they can talk about funk and shake your booty and all this—suppose if you gave them something positive?

We hope that some of the proceeds from this album will go to the mothers of Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls. Christians talk about the precious blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for our redemption. What about the blood of Tupac and Biggie? That is sacred blood.

You know, I was in show business. As a calypso artist I used to wear the kind of costumes that opened and showed the chest. And when you danced you moved your hips and waist. But my point is, it's not necessary to sell sex in order to show your gifts and talents. Once you put people's minds in the gutter, and you feed them filth, they begin to eat at the slop trough of human degeneracy. They begin to think that's the only food there is. Ask any pig. But give them something better and they will grab hold of it.

We hope that some of the proceeds from this album will go to the mothers of Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls, and to build some meaningful institution in the name of all those who have died but who have not died in vain—because if we pull the youth together, whose blood was shed to bring them together? Christians talk about the precious blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for our redemption. What about the blood of Tupac and Biggie? That is sacred blood.

Do you have either a projected date for starting work on this album or a projected lineup of people who you think will be participating?

Many have started working on their participation in the album already. We hope to have another meeting to pull our brothers and sisters together.

At one point, a young white girl asked Malcolm X, "What can I do?" He said "Nothing" and later regretted it. If you were asked the same question by a white teen—maybe somebody who comes to the tour—what would you say?

I would say that every human being should get involved in the process of atonement. Black youth are in a depressed, oppressed, suppressed condition. White youth—who did not bring our fathers into slavery—are in a somewhat privileged position because of the evil of their fathers. No, they are not responsible for this condition; yet in the atonement process, they have to take responsibility to right the wrongs. The Native Americans suffering on the reservation—how can white youth help right the wrong? The blacks that suffer in the ghetto—how can white youth help right the wrong?

One of my sons is a recovering addict. And I was blessed to go to a particular institution where he was graduating, having finished the course that they had given him. Here were blacks, whites, Hispanics, Christians, Muslims, and Jews in a condition that caused them not to think of their color, their background, their ethnicity, their education or the lack of it, their sex or sexual preference. They were dying from crack addiction. And crack cocaine produced what the revealed religions could not produce. Now, if the drug can make them one in struggle against it, then what needs to be introduced is the spiritual, universal component that can do on the highest level what crack has done at the base level. And that will involve the youth of the entire world. That is why this October 16, the World's Day of Atonement, will have its focus on youth: the young, gifted, and atoned.

Tell me about how the Nation of Islam's theology perceives whites, who, as I understand it, were supposedly created by a scientist named Yacub and are evil. If they are evil, how can they be approached as members of the struggle?

First, I think there's great and grave misunderstanding of this aspect of the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. The question is asked, "Whence came the white race?" They are not considered natives anywhere on the Earth. And scholars and scientists agree that they have as parents the black man and the black woman. That's not racist; that's an absolute mathematical, biological, genetic, historical, anthropological truth.

The whole world of mankind has been affected by the presence of whites. Freedom is good, justice is good, equity is good, righteousness is good. Now, the question we have to ask is, Have whites, in general, been good to the principle of freedom where the darker people are concerned? Answer: No. Have whites, as a body, been good to the principle of justice where the darker people are concerned? No. If you look at the moral laws laid down by the prophets of God, have they, as a body, lived up to that? The answer, of course, is no. "Well, Farrakhan, what about you black people?" Well, in reality, neither have we, okay? But they, being the leaders, have to bear the heaviest responsibility because they are the people in power. Now, can that condition of evil and rebellion to divine law be changed? The answer is yes.

Even for whites?

For anybody who will come under the transforming power of the Messiah. If I am a man of God, I cannot speak in a way that deprives any human being of access to that which will bring that human being into the favor of God, regardless of their color.

Could you ever foresee a day in which the NOI has white members?

It has white members now.

Really?

Not the NOI, I can't even say that. There are many whites who accept what I teach; they don't join the mosque, but there will come a time when every human being who is a Muslim will be considered a member of the NOI.

What are the differences between the NOI's orthodoxy and Sunni Islam?

We believe in the Qu'ran, which is the basis of belief of all the Muslims; but what we cannot divorce ourselves from is the social, political, and economic context in which Islam was introduced to us in America.

How are women treated within the Nation of Islam? Are they expected to be submissive to men, who hold most of the leadership positions?

The word "submissive" has become an ugly word when, in reality, it is what Islam is: submission to the will of God. Black women have been independent of black men and in submission to whites. Look at the men, look at the girls. Who's in the colleges? Who's filling the schools? It's the girls. Who's getting the book learning? It's the girls. Who gets the jobs? It's the girls. They're docile, see? You're in submission, all right, and you don't even realize it.

I'm in submission to the will of God; my wife is in submission to the will of God. She submits to her husband if she thinks I'm right, and I submit to her when I know she's right. And it ain't about submission to my maleness, it's about submission to what is truth and what is right. My wife ain't walking behind me. We've been married forty-four years, and she helped to make Farrakhan. My mother? Baddest black woman in the world; she made me. But in the family, the male is the authority figure in African society, Asian society, European society, wherever. God gives the male a degree of authority over the female.

Let's talk about anti-Semitism. To my mind, one of the

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best books on the Nation is In the Name of Elijah Muhammad. *It was written by a Swedish professor, Mattias Gardell, who defends you against some of the attacks by the Jewish watchdog group the Anti-Defamation League [ADL] but points out other instances of anti-Semitism by you and your followers. Can you ever dialogue with the ADL? Or is it a situation where neither side is willing to lose face by talking to the other?*

It is not with Farrakhan a question of losing face. We've already lost our face if our face is buried in falsehood, okay? I have said to the Jewish people, I am willing to sit down with you. Don't give me preconditions, because I know you are used to crushing people. This one, you can't crush.

But weren't those preconditions—as expressed by the ADL's director in the days before the Million Man March—simply a public disavowal of racism and anti-Semitism?

If you can show me where I am in error, it is nothing for me to stand before the world and apologize for having misstated, been erroneous in my preachments. Now, my argument with the Jewish community is not out of hatred. I have the deepest respect for this people who are at the head of just about every field of human endeavor. They didn't get there by being dummies. But I do not like, nor will I ever accept, the inordinate degree of control that members of the Jewish community have over black intellectual, black political, black art and culture. That control—over their life, over their intelligence—they would never relinquish as Jews to an Irishman, an Italian, or somebody else. Black intellectuals are not really free to speak. I can get a better interview from a white person who doesn't have to kowtow to somebody who may or may not be Jewish. I detest the term "anti-Semitic." Not only the term being applied to me, but I detest the very act of hating someone because of their faith, tradition, or the color of their skin. I detest that; and were I that, I would detest myself. But what I detest is inordinate control.

Let me give you an example. Michael Jackson, a very beloved and wonderful human being, is hurting. So, in his last album, he talked about "Jew me, sue me...kick me, kike me, don't you black and white me." An expression, just a line. But the wisdom, or I would call it the paranoia, of those in the record industry and others said, "No, you cannot put that out." Think about that, just those words. And they made him go back in the studio and change that. That's power! But at the same time, my little hip hop brothers can call my sisters bitches and whores and talk about their genitals and degrade themselves and that is promoted worldwide. See? Somebody is concerned about themselves and they are in control. I don't *like* that. I don't *like* that kind of control over black thought, black expression. *I don't like it.* I intend to fight it until it exists no more.

Oh, I am considered the bigot, the hater, the anti-Semite, the unrepentant one who is the embodiment of evil from their vantage point. You cannot find one member of the Nation of Islam that has been involved in any hate crime, anywhere in the country. Here in Chicago, two young men were beaten; one just a few weeks ago came out of a coma. The people that beat him were from a Catholic School. I was in Philadelphia, in Grays Ferry, where one of our sisters and her son and her nephew were beaten by a gang of young whites who came out of the basement of a social hall of a Catholic church. I challenge them: Find me one Muslim under my leadership that has been involved in a hate crime anywhere in the fifty states of America—and we're in every one of them. Who is the real hater, the real bigot? If we are so

I detest the term "anti-Semitic." Not only the term being applied to me, but I detest the very act of hating someone because of their faith, tradition, or the color of their skin. I detest that; and were I that, I would detest myself.

hateful of the Jewish people, why can't you bring me one Jew that a follower of Louis Farrakhan has beaten, or robbed, or broken into their homes, or sold their child drugs, or picketed their stores? You can't find it.

What about getting involved in politics? After interviewing you on his show, CNN's Bob Novak, a conservative, said you struck him as "somebody who would like to find some reason to lead his followers into the Republican Party." True?

That is Mr. Novak's perception. I'm not trying to lead black people into the Republican Party, but I do want to lead them out of the plantation of the Democratic Party. I don't think black people should be in the hip pocket of any party. But no, that is his perception, and the poor man has suffered just from saying a kind word. Anybody who says a kind word about Farrakhan, beat him down.

The media have definitely been critical of you. But do you consider that criticism an asset with blacks, many of whom distrust the media?

Yes. The Bible says, "No weapon formed against the righteous will prosper." There is nothing that the media have done that they perceive as negative against me that hasn't turned out ultimately to have been good for me. So I really don't care what they write. Ultimately, they will get to know me better.

Tell me about your "World Friendship Tour." You visited scores of countries, including nations that have hostile diplomatic relations with the U.S., like Libya, the Sudan, and Iraq. Members of Congress called for legal action. Why?

Fear. Those in power fear any connection of black people in America with the broad international community. They said "He betrayed his country, he betrayed the spirit of Million Man March." With forty million or more descendants of Africa, if we became politically and economically mature, America would never have the policies toward Africa she now has. That is why the linking of us with Africa is dangerous to those who suck the blood of Africa and keep our people in a weakened state in America.

I visited Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana, Suriname, Cuba, Canada. I was received as a head of state in every African country I went to. But my tour was labeled a thug fest. I visited all these countries. but the only ones they could pick out were Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, Cuba...."He visited the rogues, therefore he's a rogue." When any of the religious leaders in America visited North Vietnam, visited Moscow, visited North Korea, even visited Cuba, they were on their humanitarian work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, as though Farrakhan has no gospel to spread. Now the Pope has opened up relations with Libya—is the Pope involved in a thug fest? He's on his way to Cuba—is the Pope now hanging out with thugs? Look at this double standard.

The last thing I want to say is, after my trip to the Sudan, an article appeared in VIBE trying to link Farrakhan with slavery in the Sudan. It was very malicious. I've been to the Sudan on at least, what, four occasions? The most I've ever stayed was seven days. Nobody mentioned slavery to me as an issue.

But does slavery exist in the Sudan? Two reporters from the Baltimore Sun *were able to go there and buy child slaves, whom they later set free.*

I don't know. If slavery exists, I want to know. So we're taking a team there, very soon. If slavery exists, I want to condemn it; I want to add my voice to those who condemn slavery. But now let me ask a question: Does slavery exist in the United States? What about slaves in Louisiana today? Or Texas today? Or in parts of Mississippi and Georgia and Alabama today? Are there still blacks in virtual slavery on plantations in America right now as we speak?

What form does this slavery take? We got to look at all of it. Slavery must be condemned, but let's condemn it all. Is working a person for hardly any wages, wages that disallow them to live, is that a form of slavery? Is cocaine and the sentencing—check it out—where, for a rock you get five years, and you can have how many grams of powdered cocaine and get probation? Is this a new form of slavery? *Let's condemn it all!*

Some of you Negroes are friendly with Clinton. Am I going to say you are now in bed with a slave master? Let's talk about slavery. What is a slave? A slave is one whose power and authority is limited according to the wishes of another. Are you free? Is Colin Powell free? Is Jesse Jackson free? Let's call the slaves out *and* the slave masters. I ain't bought or bossed by nobody. I'm God's man. I'm probably the only free black man on the Earth today. ◘

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POWER MOVES

folk supernova revisted

Remember when dreadlocks used to mean something? Like, back in '88, when Tracy Chapman's debut single, "Fast Car," made our dungeons shake? There she stood, guitar in hand, dreads shorter than thimbles, testifying that being a black woman isn't easy. The Cleveland native sang about everything from racism to relationships to revolution.

Chapman may have been "Born to Fight," but she never stressed the little things. When black radio kept her songs from rotation becausa of its inability to classify her music, she never addressed its stupidity. Never has Chapman lamented about how the press fawns over her less talented, "more attractive" white counterparts, such as Jewel. Nor has she ever said, "Record four albums and sell eight million copies, then talk to me."

And just when the 33 year old had been forgotten, she returned in '96 with a triple-platinum album, *New Beginning*, and a Grammy (her second) for the spectacular single "Give Me One Reason." In an era when

tracy CHAPMAN

a remix is revered more than an original lyric, how many can boast that they've penned every song on every one of their albums? Now, a decade since Chapman's self-titled debut, her dreadlocks rest below her shoulders because they have nothing to do with style and everything to do with substance. *OJ Lima*

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POWER TOOLS

ken griffey jr.

Like TLC sang, "hat to the back" is the preferred style for the Seattle slugger. His opponents see the back of Griffey's head a lot anyway as he trots past them, rounding the bases after yet another home run.

Every celebrity has *something* that defines their ascent to stardom. Don't settle for cheap imitations—there's no doubt who each of these signature items really belongs to. *Photographs by Visko Hatfield*

tina turner

At age 57, nobody has sexier legs—plus such intelligence to go with them. It adds up to the perfect spokesperson for Hanes pantyhose. Talk about an idea with legs.

mary j. blige

Nobody keeps it cooler than the Queen of Hip Hop Soul, especially when she's stylin' her favorite white Fendi sunglasses.

Juice is what you bathe in before you are born.
Bokeem Woodbine, ebony screen prince

foxy brown

Ill na na aside, the femme fatale's almost-black M.A.C. Cyber lipstick has become her visual trademark.

lil' penny

Let's face it: With all that commercial airtime and a forthcoming book of his own, it looks like Lil' Penny Hardaway is becoming even bigger than his human likeness.

sean "puffy" combs

A bottle of Cristal used to be Puff Daddy's party favor of choice. Now he can use it to celebrate the [illegible] deal with Arista Records and the release of his own record, No Way Out—and spill a little on the ground in memory of his friend and protégé Biggie Smalls.

POWER MOVES

24 karat thespian

Sheer spiritual jubilation. That was the reaction witnessed the night of the 69th Academy Awards ceremony when the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor went to Cuba Gooding Jr. for his role as cocky football player Rod Tidwell in *Jerry Maguire*. A rush of disbelief, elation, and adrenaline pumped through his veins, and he emitted the kind of emotion where your spirit leads your body and your limbs follow. It was *not*, however, the "cooning-for-massa Stepin Fetchit show" some black folks claimed it was. Gooding, 28, rejoiced because he had the opportunity to breathe amazing depth, complexity, and life into an atypical interracial buddy role that was integral to a humanist story. And this in a Hollywood where African-American actors in mainstream films are usually confined to black furniture, mammy pal, or wisecracking smart-ass roles.

Gooding was elated

cuba GOODING JR.

because he now joins the ranks of Sidney Poitier, Louis Gossett Jr., and Denzel Washington, who constitute that rarest of species: the black Oscar recipient. And in the process, he's elevated the thespian game for his hip hop generation acting peers. So what if there is a little Rod in Cuba. Like off-typecast Nicholson and De Niro, brothers are finally getting paid for being themselves too.

Omoronke Idowu

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OF THUGS AND THESPIANS

In *Hoodlum*, Tim Roth plays the ultimate greedy, racist gangster; but he's anything but that in real life. *By Darius James. Photograph by Dan Winters*

When Tim Roth enters the bar room of Dresden, a popular watering hole in the boho Los Feliz section of L.A., he's dressed in worn jeans and a funky looking T-shirt, carrying a small trash bag stuffed with God knows what. He looks like a poster child for that common L.A. tourist dis-traction: *the homeless white man.* If Roth hadn't gained such wide recognition for his Oscar-nominated performance as an evil Tutti-Frutti in *Rob Roy* and for his work in hits such as *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, the LAPD would've locked him up for vagrancy years ago.

As Roth strolls toward my booth, he freezes in mock surprise, saying "You're eating here?!"

I look at him coolly, thinking why is it that Brits can be snotty over absolutely nothing. "How can you fuck up a hamburger in *L.A.*?" I retort.

Ordering a beer, he sits across from my companion and quickly leaps into a discussion with her about food. Out of nowhere, he says, "I've gotta do this *press* bullshit," then turns to me with a big crocodile grin. I resist the impulse to go upside his head with the bottle of Amstel Light he's sucking on and set his ass straight.

"Is this for *Hoodlum*?" he asks, resigned.

Yeah....

"I haven't seen it, so I don't know what it's like."

It's a movie.

"That's what I figured. I like [director] Bill Duke a lot. He's great. And Larry [Fishburne] is terrific. But I haven't seen it."

Homeboy doesn't know what he's missin'. Starring Laurence Fishburne, Andy Garcia, Vanessa Williams, and Roth, *Hoodlum* is a richly detailed period piece that mixes classic gangster film tropes with "kill whitey" blaxploitation. Built around the legend of Bumpy Johnson—the Harlem mack and numbers kingpin who figured in *Shaft* and *Uptown Saturday Night*—the movie is also a lesson in black empowerment. It substitutes the Marxist concern for the urban underclass—characteristic of the 1930s gangster film—with Garveyite Nationalism. Fishburne is cast as the politicized Bumpy, and Roth plays his nemesis, Dutch Schultz, an I-don't-give-a-fuck-about-you-or-your-mama-so-kiss-my-honkie-ass-then-eat-shit-'n'-die greaseball in a cheap suit. And he's one funny greaseball in a cheap suit too.

When Roth met with director Duke, he said he didn't want to do the typical movie bad guy with the sinister, sandpaper whisper. "I wanted to do Dutch Schultz as a cross between James Cagney and Bugs Bunny," says Roth. He comes off more like Yosemite Sam crossed with the Tazmanian Devil.

Roth is highly entertaining, but the central conflict between him and Bumpy lacks tension at times. This is because Fishburne's character doesn't have a clear internal flaw to overcome. He's Bumpy without the bumps, and he remains too distant, too distinct from the money-hungry white boy Schultz. After all, truly classic battles require that there be a bit of the villain in the hero and vice versa.

"There really wasn't the time for that kind of collaboration," Roth says. "Laurence and I didn't really [spend time together] until we got on the set....We talked about how to play the character and kind of invented stuff. But the film is not exactly true to history. I don't think Dutch and Bumpy ever met."

Born into lower-middle-class circumstances in London, Tim Roth was a "red-diaper baby," meaning his parents were socialists. His mother was once a school teacher, but now, she devotes herself to painting. His father, deceased, changed his

Juice is when famous artists call you by your first name and hug you with congrats as if you've been friends for years and you've actually never met.
Nia Long, love joneser

Fishburne and Roth face off in *Hoodlum*.

name in the late '40s from Smith to Roth. "He was a journalist after the war," explains Roth, "and he would go to places like Tripoli where the English were very unpopular. To have the name [Roth] helped him. It's German-Jewish, I think."

Roth, 36, graduated from a working-class high school (where he was often "on the run" from classmates looking to kick his ass) and later attended art school. "There was always drawing in my family," he says. "My father could draw. My sister does it. We could all do it. I was given a place in art college but I didn't spend much time there. I had discovered acting already."

Roth isn't a big fan of the Royal Shakespeare Company, where many prominent English actors got their training. Instead, he prefers what happens on the fringe of British theater in the smaller companies, such as those that perform in the pubs, where he himself first started acting. As for his film career, he favors working in low-budget movies with first-time directors. "It's one of the greatest pleasures there is for an actor," says Roth, who fondly recalls his work in Mike Leigh's *Meantime*, Jeff Stanzler's *Jumpin' at the Boneyard*, and Vondie Curtis-Hall's *Gridlock'd*. "It's 'us against the world.' It's a little band of players going 'Fuck you! We're going to make this film!' "

Regardless of budget size, Roth is none too eager to do any typically British "Merchant/Ivory–type stuff." "I was never interested in doing films about the problems of the upper classes," he says. "My philosophy was that the [upper classes] have got the money to deal with it. *Get a shrink. You can afford it.* I'm much more drawn to working-class social issues. And that is a direct result of my upbringing."

Tim Roth was a teenager in the late '70s when punk rock and conservatism were both on the rise in England. "It was the time of the Anti-Nazi Leagues and Rock Against Racism," says Roth. "It was the time of the National Front and the British National Party, which were both right wing. When I was a kid, my father would take me to demonstrations against those people, so I try not to do films that would make him turn in his grave. Even *Reservoir Dogs* was about working-class issues."

But your character was a cop, I say.

"I played the good guy," he grins.

Shakur and Roth laugh it up in *Gridlock'd*.

Well....

"It depends on how you look at it," he says, grinning again. "Most cops are working class."

In Quentin Tarantino's *Dogs* (1992), Roth turned in an unforgettable performance as Mr. Orange, the undercover cop who refuses to reveal his identity to his fellow bank robbers even though he's bleeding to death. "I didn't want to rehearse the role, and I didn't think about it before we actually shot it," recalls Roth. "What you see is the first take. If I'd thought about it, prepared it, and tried rehearsing it, the stuff probably would've been boring. That it was fresh was important to me. A lot of the time I don't think about it until the day they say 'Action.' Certain stuff requires that."

How do you know what requires preparation or what doesn't?

"As I've been going along, I just figured it out," says Roth, who's had a few beers by this point. "I never went to drama school. I don't buy into that whole method acting thing of living your character. For me, it's nonsense. Sometimes you just go on gut reactions and trust the script, the director, and the people around you. Each script requires a different method....So really, what it's about is the experience of acting as opposed to anything else."

One can observe this same kind of commitment to craftsmanship in *Hoodlum*. Though Roth spits out the word "nigger" with a relish that might make some uncomfortable, his role as a racist is instructive. In one scene, his character, Dutch Schultz, treats black flunky Bubb Hewlett (Clarence Williams III) with uncharacteristic benevolence, offering him leftovers from a deli sandwich. Hewlett resists at first, but Schultz browbeats him into compliance, demonstrating the underlying bigotry of liberal patronage. I ask him about the racial dynamics in the film, but while framing the question I fumble and speak aloud: I'm trying to find a context for the word "nigger."

"I'm trying to find one too," says Roth. He then laughs like Woody Woodpecker, implying there is no context.

Roth tackled more complex "racially charged" terrain in last year's *Gridlock'd* as Stretch, the dope-addicted pal of Tupac Shakur's Spoon. The movie is about the love that bonds two people from different backgrounds. For Roth and Tupac, it was a bond that extended off-screen as well. "Tupac was a man on the verge of becoming an adult," says Roth. "He wanted very badly to play the character in *Gridlock'd*. He said, 'People are going to expect me to pull out a gun, shoot it sideways, and wear my hat fuckin' backwards. But this is a chance for me to make a change.' Tupac wanted to change his life, but he was in the grip of unscrupulous people."

Though Roth himself has played his share of "unscrupulous people," off-camera he steers clear of them. "Drug dealers and pimps and murderers fascinate me to play, but I really don't want to hang with them," he says. "I wanna keep those types of people away from my kids." (Roth has three children, whose names are tatooed on his bicep.)

Tim Roth has become one of indie cinema's most bankable icons, building his career on the outcasts and underdogs he's portrayed in movies like *The Hit*, *Little Odessa*, *Captives*, and the ABC mini-series *Murder in the Heartland*. But I still wasn't convinced that the image he presented as a serious, radically engaged artist with leftist sympathies was entirely true. What bugged me was a comment he made in a recent issue of *Bomb* magazine about his first film, the award-winning BBC production *Made in Britain* (1984), in which he plays a racist skinhead. The comment: *"I've always hated whenever skinheads or racists aren't portrayed right. They have the National Front in England, which is a pretty nasty organization. I went to a couple of their meetings and there were some very bright people there."*

I ask Roth to explain what he meant.

"Stereotypes are too easy," he says, eyeing me with some wariness. "The insidious and cleverly disguised arms of the right are what bother me. It's very easy to portray skinheads as stupid—then they don't mean anything.

"*But*," he continues, "if it comes from reasoned and intelligent thought, then it's *truly* terrifying. The guy I played in *Made in Britain* was fucking intelligent. It was his intelligence that had taken him into right-wing politics. In fact, when I went to the meetings, the skinheads and storm troopers didn't scare me as much as the lawyers, the teachers—the people you wouldn't be able to see. The enemy is hard to pinpoint if they're clever about it. Look at the White House—*the biggest and best-armed gang in the world.*"

Tim Roth's father would be pleased to know that while his son has become a hot commodity in the film industry, he's still true to the color of his diapers. ◘

This season the look is lace, and designer Byron Lars shows us why! Sexy, playful and easy to wear, lace goes with almost anything, like Byron's white cotton twist front shirt pictured here. Accessories by Misha McGlown. Hair by African Pride.

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TRUE GRIT

Nearly 30 years after *The Mod Squad*, Clarence Williams III has still got game

FUNKY FIVE-O Undercover cops Pete Cochrane (Michael Cole), Julie Barnes (Peggy Lipton), and Linc Hayes (Clarence Williams III) busted moves and crooks in *The Mod Squad*.

Some years ago, at the Playboy Jazz Festival in L.A., Clarence Williams III was chillin' backstage with his friend Miles Davis. "Clamps," the jazz great asked in his gravel whisper, "when you goin' back on TV?" (Clamps was the nickname Miles coined for the television icon of big-Afro cool.)

"I don't know, man," Clamps answered.

"*Shit*," Miles exclaimed. "I ain't got nothin' to watch in the afternoon now." What Miles missed on the tube was a hippie undercover cop for the LAPD named Linc Hayes of *The Mod Squad*.

The serious, intense, and physically imposing Clarence "Clamps" Williams III—whose hair is *still* styled in his trademark 'fro, only shorter and grayer—recalls that the producers of the show were always angry with him during the landmark first season, in 1968.

"I had to do it my way," says Clarence, "because you can fail doing it your way or you can fail doing it the other guy's way....So I used to throw pages of scripts out. They would have connotations that I could not subscribe to; I knew they had to go." Bringing a sense of militant pride into our TV-watching lives, the actor wanted his work on the series—which ran up until 1973—to reflect something "African-American kids could go and see and not be embarrassed about."

Since *The Mod Squad*, the 58-year-old Williams has sustained his power as an iconic force in black popular culture by tackling diverse and often difficult film roles, playing a nappy-head, coked-out heavy in *52 Pick-Up*; the Glyph's pained pops in *Purple Rain*; a junk-addicted dad in *Sugar Hill*; and an eerie undertaker in *Tales From the Hood*. He can be seen this summer in TNT's *The George Wallace Story* as the Alabama governor's convict caretaker, and in Johnny Depp's upcoming directorial debut, *The Brave*, in which he plays a troubled priest.

The son of a Harlem jazz musician, Williams first discovered his calling during a visit to the Harlem Y in 1957. He was there to borrow 20 bucks from his sister but accidentally locked himself in the building's darkened basement theater during a play rehearsal. "When the house lights came up," Williams remembers, "Vonnette Carol [the director] said, 'Come here.' I walked over to her, and she asks, 'Are you an actor?' I say, No, ma'am. She asks, 'Would you like to be one?' I said, Yes, ma'am—not really wanting to be an actor. She says 'Here, read this.'"

His reading of the play, titled *Dark of the Moon*, led to a year-and-a-half-long apprenticeship with the Little Theater, members of which included Cicely Tyson, Roscoe Lee Browne, and Isabel Sanford. From there Williams did a series of off-off-Broadway plays and, in 1959, got a part in the religious TV drama *Lamp Unto My Feet*. Four years later he landed his first film role in *The Cool World*, a gritty independent well known on the film-school circuit.

Though he has yet to be given the recognition—or starring roles—he deserves, Williams hasn't let up. In this month's *Hoodlum*, he gives the film its single most compelling performance as Bubb Hewlett, an embattled soldier for gangster Dutch Schultz who's trying to corner the numbers racket in Depression-era Harlem. Williams not only drew on the script and available historical materials for his character, but on his own life as well. "When I was a kid growing up in Harlem," he says, "I ran a couple of numbers for some bankers. That's how I knew about *that* game." *Darius James*

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Just because hot fashion designer Byron Lars is branching out into handbags, furs and hats doesn't mean he's lost his flair for the basics, as proven by these soft-as-butter leather pants. Stunning all by themselves, you'll be happy to know they also work well with a wide range of tops. Accessories by Misha McGlown. Hair by African Pride.

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PURE PLAYERS

Engaging the world as neither clown nor stud, whore nor mammy, but as men and women coming forth to claim their place in the world stage. Hey. Juice. Here we is. Take us on our own terms. You ain't never seen nothin' like us!
Sonia Sanchez, lyric wordsmith

You don't have to be all that talented to catch a little spotlight in Hollywood. Boning a studio exec, hiring a crafty personal publicist, getting busted for drugs, or lucking into a blockbuster with a high-voltage costar can put any average actor on the fast track to celebrity. How else to explain all those mediocre players plugging up the "hot" columns of your typical movie magazine? Well, VIBE decided it was time to recognize the real deal—eight rising stars, whose true power lies in their passion for acting, in the exuberant and often daring way they wrestle a character into being. These are the young guns to watch, the ones loaded with raw talent, sex appeal, and that extra intangible that can only be described as *flavor*. Ready or not, here they come.

Clockwise from left: **Isaiah Washington** (*Clockers*, *Get on the Bus*, *love jones*. Next up: *Bullworth*, directed by Warren Beatty); **N'Bushe Wright** (*Zebrahead*, *Dead Presidents*. Next up: *Blade*, costarring Wesley Snipes); **Regina King** (*Jason's Lyric*, *Jerry Maguire*. Next up: *Mighty Joe Young*, with Bill Paxton); **Jacob Vargas** (*Mi Vida Loca*, *Selena*. Next up: *Santa Fe*); **Gabriel Casseus** (*New Jersey Drive*, *Get on the Bus*. Next up: *An Alan Smithee Film*, with Sylvester Stallone; and *Fallen*, starring Denzel Washington); **Nia Long** (*Boyz N the Hood*, *Friday*, *love jones*. Next up: starring in *Soul Food* opposite Vanessa Williams and Vivica A. Fox); **Michael Rapaport** (*Zebrahead*, *Higher Learning*, *Cop Land*. Next up: *illtown*, with Lili Taylor; and *Palmetto*, with Woody Harrelson); **Paula Jai Parker** (*Friday*, *Tales From the Hood*, *Spring*. Next up: *Woo*, starring Jada Pinkett).

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Hollywood Confidential

Real juice is mystery. Those who have true power work among the shadows. They're hard to reach and touch; their ideas are not easily comprehended. Aaliyah, R&B ingénue

Or, How to survive in showbiz without breaking a sweat. Text and illustrations *by Kyle Baker*

Rarely has a truer cliché been coined than that which has it that all clichés have their basis in truth. (I'll credit that line to Lubitsch, as I always do when in doubt. Watch, it'll turn up in Bartlett's next revised edition.)

For example, Show Business is even *more* like No Business than most would suspect. I've been successfully employed in said Biz for five years now, paying my rent and bills on time, eating daily, and buying clothes when the occasion merits it, with a few bucks left to take the girlfriend to a restaurant each weekend.

So far, those five years of steady occupation in the Industry have resulted in exactly 30 minutes of actual produced film.

You may wonder what I've been doing for the rest of these five years. If you don't, I'll pretend you do, since this seems a poor spot to stop writing.

Here are some of the things I've been doing:

LUNCH WITH MY EXECUTIVE

I was well into my second year of salaried inertia at Warner Bros., and in all the time I'd been with the firm, no one had ever asked me to do any work. On my own initiative, I'd taken a few idle hours to write a short teleplay, yet nobody had felt an urge to read it. I asked the executive who hired me why I was never expected to deliver anything for the money the studio was paying me.

"Because," he explained, "we're not paying you *enough*."

LUNCH WITH EVERYONE

The best restaurants in L.A. are distinguished by their patrons' inability to stay seated. The aisles of the poshest L.A. eateries make the floor of the New York Stock Exchange seem desolate by comparison. The customers wandering from table to table in an A-List restaurant easily outnumber the waiters, and I once asked a TV star to get me some more coffee while he was up. I'm sure those stories about agents stealing tips are exaggerated.

My fancy lunches usually go one of two ways: If I'm with an influential producer or executive, then the masses are drawn, like pilgrims to the Wailing Wall, to hover about my table and smilingly bring my companion up to date on their recent projects and office relocations. I am introduced, my mouth usually full. Someone promises to call someone else, then it's over. My companion asks to be reminded of what it was we were talking about, but before I can swallow, another brave soul materializes tableside, and I feel like the bride's grandmother at a receiving line.

If I am lunching with a producer who does not attract a sufficient crowd, I am then taken, almost by the hand, and presented from table to table. "I want you to meet Kyle Baker. He's writing a picture for us." If the seated diner has heard of me before, they will tell me where. "Oh, yes, you wrote so-and-so. I read it at such-and-such." If the victim has not heard of me, I watch them forget my name as it is uttered. I've never figured out the point of these short presentations. I'm often tempted to whip out a deck of cards and do a few magic tricks. Or maybe present a sample case full of wristwatches. Or demonstrate a new miracle stain remover. "This is Kyle Baker. He's going to do a few birdcalls for us."

So what do they want? Something that appeals to the lowest common denominator? "Yes." Like what, *Ghost Chimp, M.D.*? An awed silence—"How would that work?" Uh, he's the ghost of lab monkey who haunts these large-breasted twin sisters...

Once, and only once, I tried to beat the system. Heartily enjoying my free meal with two producers, I was halfway to dessert and closing fast when one of my benefactors sprang to his feet, exclaiming, "C'mon, Kyle, I wantcha to meet someone." Then he ran away.

I remained seated and told my remaining tablemate that I hated bugging strangers while they were eating, and besides, I never understood why—

My tablemate's eyes drifted above my shoulder, and behind me I heard the voice of our missing comrade:

"C'mon, Larry, I wantcha to meet somebody."

I turned in the direction of my associate's gaze, and, to my horror, Laurence Fishburne was rising from his seat far across the room. I must point out that our tables were at opposite ends of the restaurant. No two tables were farther apart than ours. Fans of Mr. Fishburne are aware that he always wears a look of deepest anguish, and that famous glare now bombarded little ol' seated, full-mouthed me. To make matters worse, the woman he was eating with was beautiful. Laurence Fishburne was being dragged away from lunch with a beautiful woman to be introduced to some punk writer who thinks he's too good to walk over and say hi. The glare's wattage increased. I was positive Mr. Fishburne was memorizing my face to ensure that he would never work with me in a thousand lifetimes, not even by accident. I got across the room as fast as I could without running, but the damage was done. We now all three of us stood in the center of the room. As you can imagine, every eye in the restaurant was on us.

"Larry, this is Kyle Baker! He wrote that thing Chi McBride was in."

The woman at Larry's table was impressed, a fact I desperately wanted to point out to Larry, but didn't.

"Chi's my boy," said Larry. "You take care of him."

I don't remember what I said, but I'm sure it was something intended to get him back to his table. Go sit down, or something like that.

It was pleasant. I had worried all these years over nothing. It's just the way they do things in showbiz. It's not considered an intrusion at all. Everyone mingles freely in restaurants.

Parties, on the other hand, are another matter.

PHONE CONVERSATION WITH A FILM PRODUCER

Hello?

"Kyle! Guess what? I just sold a horror movie to New Line, and you're gonna write it!"

That's great! What's it about?

"I have no idea."

I'll do it if I can blow up the world. I'm really into that lately.

"Great! Sure! The film should be about the nature of evil, though."

Evil is bad.

"Perfect! That'll be the title! I'll call your agent!"

STUDIO MEETING

The meeting concerned a TV show another writer had scripted based on a book I had written.

Him: "The network passed on the show."

Me: Why?

"They believe it appeals to too narrow a demographic. Everybody's the same age, the city's a little too hip—"

They think nobody wants to watch a show about a bunch of young people in New York?

"Right."

This was in 1992. Two years before *Friends*.

I struggled vainly to keep my eyes out of the tops of their sockets as I exhaled audibly.

So what do they want? Something that appeals to the lowest common denominator?

"Yes."

Like what, *Ghost Chimp, M.D.*?

An awed silence. "How would that work?"

Uh—I thought fast—he's the ghost of a lab monkey who haunts the apartment of these large-breasted twin sisters, Lois and Carmen Denominator. They have to keep him a secret from the nosy landlord, maybe Gordon Jump, who's got a strict "No Pets" policy.

"That's great."

Yeah, see, the Ghost Chimp's got these magic powers, but he can't control them—I was really getting into it now—like, Lois will wish she could lose weight, so the chimp waves his cigar, and POOF! She's suddenly six inches tall. Just then, Gordon Jump bursts in. "I thought I heard a monkey in here! What's this?" Carmen quickly says, "Oh, uh, it's, it's a doll I made." "You don't say? Boy, it certainly is realistic." He picks it up, starts twisting Lois's arms around; she tries not to scream. Gordon says, "You know, I've got a friend in the toy business, maybe we could—" Well, you get the idea.

"Great. Get to work on it. I'll call your agent."

Over the next month, I actually tried to write the damned thing. I got as far as the theme song.

He's the Ghost Chimp, the Ghost Chimp,
The Ghostliest Chimp in town.
A lab coat full of cheap cigars
Conceals his vivisection scars.
He'll fill your day with merriment,
This former lab experiment.
He's colder than an icicle,
He smokes and rides a tricycle.

By the time I reached the tag line (*Take these three and call them when you're mourning*), I could stand myself no longer. I decided to put *Ghost Chimp* away. I hoped nobody would mind. Perhaps the studio had already forgotten about it. After all, it was just an idea tossed off at a short meeting about another show. I was sure nobody would remember it.

"Kyle! How's that *Ghost Chimp* script coming? I love those girls, Lois and Carmen."

Damn.

It's coming along. But listen, I've got something better.

I racked my brain. *Bounty Hunter Dad.*

"How's that?"

Half family show, half adventure. He's a single dad struggling to balance crimefighting and home-making—*Full House* meets *MacGyver*. Appeals to the broadest possible demographic.

"That's terrific! Put *Ghost Chimp* on the back burner and get right to work on *Bounty Hunter Dad*. I'll call your agent."

Damn.

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A MOMENT OF PLEASURE
WITH THE 100MM CIGARETTE

a secret revealed

marianne JEAN-BAPTISTE

The first black British actor to be nominated for an Academy Award (for Best Supporting Actress in last year's *Secrets & Lies*), Marianne Jean-Baptiste spent months workshopping with the film's writer/director, Mike Leigh, to develop one of the most realistic, complex characters to grace any country's movie theaters recently. Jean-Baptiste, 30, made her big-screen debut as Hortense Cumberbatch, a young black optometrist who, after the death of her adoptive mom, contacts her biological mother, who turns out to be a white, less-than-stable factory worker with family problems of her own.

Jean-Baptiste's deeply moving performance proved that great acting doesn't have to be all tears and sobbing and soap opera–style breakdowns. While her costars in *Secrets & Lies*—which won the Palme D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival—fell into screechy-voiced hysterics all around her, the graduate of London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts chose to mine the subtle minutiae of human behavior: a slight nod, a quick sigh, the gentle stroke of a hand. It seemed that all of life's varied emotions could be found in one of her quiet gestures. Or simply in her large brown eyes, looking at once sad and strong, knowing and vulnerable.

David Bry

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ANARCHY IN THE UK

GOLDEN TOUCH

There is one superstar in the music widely known as jungle and wistfully referred to as drum 'n' bass, and his name is Goldie. The moniker is as much an homage to Max Julien's mystic pimp overlord in *The Mack* as to this native Briton's gleaming complexion and 14k fronts. The dental work makes his smile radiate like a sunbeam—but don't mistake him for Mr. Happy Face.

Goldie didn't invent jungle, but he has consolidated and popularized the movement. The ease with which he translates drum 'n' bass philosophy into sound bites has helped, as has his turn as promoter of the Metalheadz on Sunday nights at London's always-packed Blue Note club (Metalheadz is also the name of Goldie's label). His debut album, 1995's *Timeless*, brought cinematic production to the form—the 22-minute title track is the boomingest soundtrack Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* or Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* never had. Epic in conception; revolutionary in intention, this is music to signal the end of one era and provide a gateway to the next.

There's no point even in arguing whether jungle is to hip hop what bebop was to swing—the next stage in black musical evolution. Jungle is built around an innovative (and frenetic) drum pattern, thereby conforming to bebop drummer Kenny Clarke's observation that every radical shift in the course of black music is dictated by the role of the drum.

If you've never caught a jungle rave in London, you've never truly experienced the music. Strategically placed five-foot woofer cabinets insure that bass will not only be in your face, but your chest, your groin, and your ass. The effect is a polyrhythmic particle explosion going off in syncopated bursts all over your body. Though the scene was once heavily associated with the taking of Ecstasy, heads now appear to be flipping out more over the beats than artificial stimulants.

When I attended my first warehouse jam, in 1995, the crowd was mostly teenage black Brits and a few adventurous white girls. The media's take on the scene made it sound too scary for white men to attend without police escort. I found the vibe far less heavy than your typical dancehall event, which confirmed my conviction that the only *real* threat was of black people having fun by themselves. (DJs/promoters/record moguls like Goldie and L.T.J Bukem have provided venues that have broken down the walls of prejudice that have kept some folks afraid of drum 'n' bass flava.) Tumbling out at 6 a.m., my crew and I fully understood the meaning of the term "rinsed." Hearing jungle with stadium-rock sound reenforcement is like dying and going to African drum-choir heaven.

As this is written, the world awaits the release of Goldie's second album, which his label is keeping tightly under wraps. Held aloft by Goldie's flaming wings, drum 'n' bass clearly has got its eyes on Interstellar space, if not the music regions to which John Coltrane and Miles Davis went and where few since have dared follow. Be there or be Armageddon square.

Greg Tate

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID LEE; FOR GOLDIE; STYLING BY EMIL WILBEKIN

MODERN ENGLISH

The next British invasion involves some futuristic, next level–type music movements. Expatriate hipster *Chiedo Nkwocha* educates and civilizes us all about the goings-on. *Photograph by Donovan*

Two weeks. Two weeks back in London was all it took to confirm my sneaking suspicion that the things those American scribes had been saying about the capital being the coolest place on Earth was, in fact, true. New bars, shops, and restaurants had opened up all over the place, and the buzz on the streets was damn near palpable.

What happened? It was just 12 months since I'd left London for New York, supposedly the *reigning* coolest city on Earth. I'll spare you the boring details such as the upturn in the economy, the forward-thinking fashion designers, actors, and artists, and the improved English soccer team's impact on national pride. What's really setting things alight overseas is the music scene; or rather, the music movement. Sounds in the U.K. are constantly evolving into something else. This is a place where the dopest records are rarely available in stores and the best radio stations keep shutting down because of the authorities. Confused? First, try to grasp a few fundamental concepts:

Diverse cultures: Racial tensions exist in London, but they rarely spill over into the music community, resulting in Asians mixing with blacks mixing with whites mixing with Asians to create some of the most original music being made today.

DJ collectives: As in the days of Soul II Soul, Massive Attack, Family Funktion, and Shake and Fingerpop, DJs are joining forces to harness talent, increase productivity, and, through rotation, control the flava on any given club night. See Goldie's intelligent Metalheadz (featuring, among others, female DJs Kemistry and Storm); Bristol's Reprazent step crew, headed by Roni Size; Coldcut's beat scientists brigade, the Ninja crew; and the hip hop squads Rampage and the mighty mighty Boogie Bunch.

Many of these DJs started out, or make guest appearances, on pirate radio, an essential British phenomenon born of boredom with the monolithic BBC. Though strictly illegal, these mobile stations can number more than 10 on a weekend. Sound quality depends on how close you live to the hastily set-up transmitter. Key stations such as Kool FM and Heart FM play tunes that other DJs nod—as well as scratch—their heads to. That's because these stations are playing mostly **dubplates**, another crucial ingredient in the British music scene. To stay ahead in what's a fiercely competitive game, the better dancehall DJs get and cut exclusive tracks on 10-inch acetate discs. A fixture in reggae for years, the dubplate is a crucial means of testing a crowd's reaction to the freshest sounds and proving one's awareness.

british rap:

After a promising start in the mid-'80s (Derek B, London Posse, the Demon Boyz), British rap lost favor with the English public with the advent of America's golden era (De La, PE, etc.) and has since been much maligned for their supposed wack rhyming skills. But ask any English rap aficionado, and they'll tell you different. Marcus, from Wyld Pytch Records in Soho firmly believes that English lyricists have always been on point but that the beats have been lacking. When English rap catches up—which it is now doing, Marcus assures me—then America better watch out. (Labels: Bite It, ffrr, Pussy Foot. Artists: Rodney P, Son of Noize, Ty featuring Shorty Blitz.)

trip hop:

Everybody loves a good beat, especially a slow headnodder to accompany a well-rolled Phillie. Vocals are optional, rhythm is everything; not too fast, not too slow—that's trip hop, baby, or abstract hip hop or easy listening for the '90s. Whatever you call it, the effect is the same: you gots to chill. Born out of a surplus of riddims and not enough recognized talent to rhyme over them, the dawn of the beat symphonic arrived on Mo Wax's *Headz* compilation (1994), featuring, among others, DJ Shadow and Howie B, who's gone on to work with U2, no less. That album inspired a rash of similar product, among them Wall of Sound's *Give 'Em Enough Dope* series and *Dope on Plastic Volumes 1-4*. (Labels: Mo Wax, Pussy Foot, Skint, NINEBARecords, Ninja Tune, Dorado/Filter.)

son of trip hop:

Because of the slowish drum beat, variations on the trip hop theme are endless. Check the jazzy joints from artists such as the triplastic Flavornaughts (NINEBARecords), The Funky Nod Bods (Dope Traffickin') and the Wiseguys (Wall of Sound). For those in need of big banging beats, the Dalmic Brothers and the Eccentric Abbas (both on On Delancey Street) are there wit the remedy. Hip hop flava can be found on Herbaliser's LP, *Blow Your Headphones* (Ninja); beats with a retro feel from Monk and Canatella (Cup of Tea Records/Quango); and then there's the more abstract stuff by artists such as Cujo (NINEBARecords) Outside (Filter/Dorado) and Palm Skin Productions (Hut), who, as well as stretching your aural information, are all equally at home dabbling in drum 'n' bass.

drum 'n' bass:

Hugely influential music that can now be heard everywhere from clubs to TV adverts to David Bowie's new album. The rat-tat-on-cat drum pattern came out of the early 1990s hardcore techno era, when DJs such as Fabio and Grooverider experimented with breakbeats to create a new and distinctive sound. Because the music has mushroomed in the past four years, there's now a need to break it down a lil' something like this:

ragga jungle:

Probably the earliest recognizable form of the genre: dancehall lyrics laid over off-the-hook breakbeats. Imagine a reggae tune coming in over the speakers, a pregnant pause, then *D-d-d-d-d, bass line*! "Rewind, selector" is all you'll be able to say each and every time. Check Zinc's "Super Sharp Shooter," Shy FX's "Original Nutter," DJ SS's "The Lighter," the *V.I.P.* compilation, General Levy's "Incredible," Rebel MC's LP, *Black Meaning Good*, and Greensleeves's compilation *Ragga Jungle Anthems, Volume 1* to catch the jump-up vibe.

intelligent jungle:

For all the excitement of ragga, some found it too hard and decided to calm it down a bit. Goldie's first release, the 1992 single "Terminator," introduced epic, complex breakbeat melodies to the world. Though not alone, he's the one, to quote Special Ed, who's "living like a star." LTJ Bukem, another leading exponent of the form, helped create new hybrids by removing the dancehall lyrics and tempering the bass line of attack.

jazzstep:

Free-form breakbeat samples in the guise of jazz music. This is some *entirely* different shit! Even jazz vocalist Cleveland Watkiss has changed codes, providing you with ample reason to dust off those spats and do the lindy hop. Kind of. Experts in the field include Alex Reece (check his *So Far* LP) and the superb Photek, whose tracks "Ni Ten Ichi Ryu" and "The Hidden Camera" display sublime originality.

hardstep:

After the hype surrounding drum 'n' bass, original punters began to cry out for something a little rougher. Heavily influenced by Detroit techno, hardstep takes a bit of getting used to, as the combination of pummeling beats and crazy organ chops hits you like a carpenter working overtime on your head. Landmarks include Grooverider's *Hardstep Selection* on Kickin Records, DJ Krust's *Music Box* (not to be confused with Mariah Carey's album) on Full Cycle, and everything on the Hardware label.

bungle:

Another silly term that describes traditional Indian rhythms that have been infused with jungle breakbeats. Because of the very nature of life in London, the mixture of breakbeats and bhangra, which induces hype dancing ciphers *all night long*, was inevitable. From Asian Dub Foundation to Talvin Singh's *Anokha: Sounds of the Asian Underground* to Nitin Sawhney's *Priest* to Bally Sagoo, the Asian underground has never sounded so good.

the future?

Drum 'n' bass will calm down and stop being in such a hurry to catch its tail. Meanwhile, yet another new music is stirring in the belly of the underground clubs: speed garage, which takes the elements of drum 'n' bass and adds some soulful lyrics into the mix. Purveyors include Ice Cream Records and 500 Rekords. Elsewhere, trip hop is merging with electronica and forming something called "swamp trance." Enough already.

Big up to *Touch*, *Mixmag*, *Jockey Slut*, and *The Wire* magazines, all of which support the music that blows up the spot that needs to be brought to your attention.
Peace, I'm out.

UK

THE CROWN'S JEWELS

The pain and politics of U.K. hip hop

BLAK TWANG
British rap's great black hope

In 1986, MC Shan told us that hip hop started out in the park. I wonder if he knew that, in less than a decade, the child brought forth from the streets of New York would grow into a global giant, spreading brain waves, beats, and bass lines from hemisphere to hemisphere.

One strong outpost is the United Kingdom, a nation with a history of reselling us our own culture (read: the Beatles). England gave us legendary talent like Slick Rick, who hails from Wimbledon, in London—a great place for tennis and lawn bowling. Unfortunately, Rick had to travel to America to blow up, as did Monie Love, who left London's Battersea area in the late '80s to link with New York's Native Tongues. Devoted disciples may even remember the Cookie Crew, who didn't make much noise in the U.S., but contributed nonetheless with their 1989 single "Born This Way," which reached the U.K. pop charts.

In many aspects, Brits keep it realer than most Americans—who have gotten too used to shrugging off problems like the sacrilege of disconnecting the DJ from live shows. Employing pop hooks and performing to DAT tracks are both no-nos in England, where fundamental emceeing and deejaying skills are still celebrated.

Judging by the atmosphere at some of London's clubs (like Powerhaus, SW1, and Samantha's), the true essence of hip hop is alive and well across the Atlantic. At these nightspots, fronting is minimal: few people pose up on the wall acting "hard," and when they're open on a song, they actually *dance*.

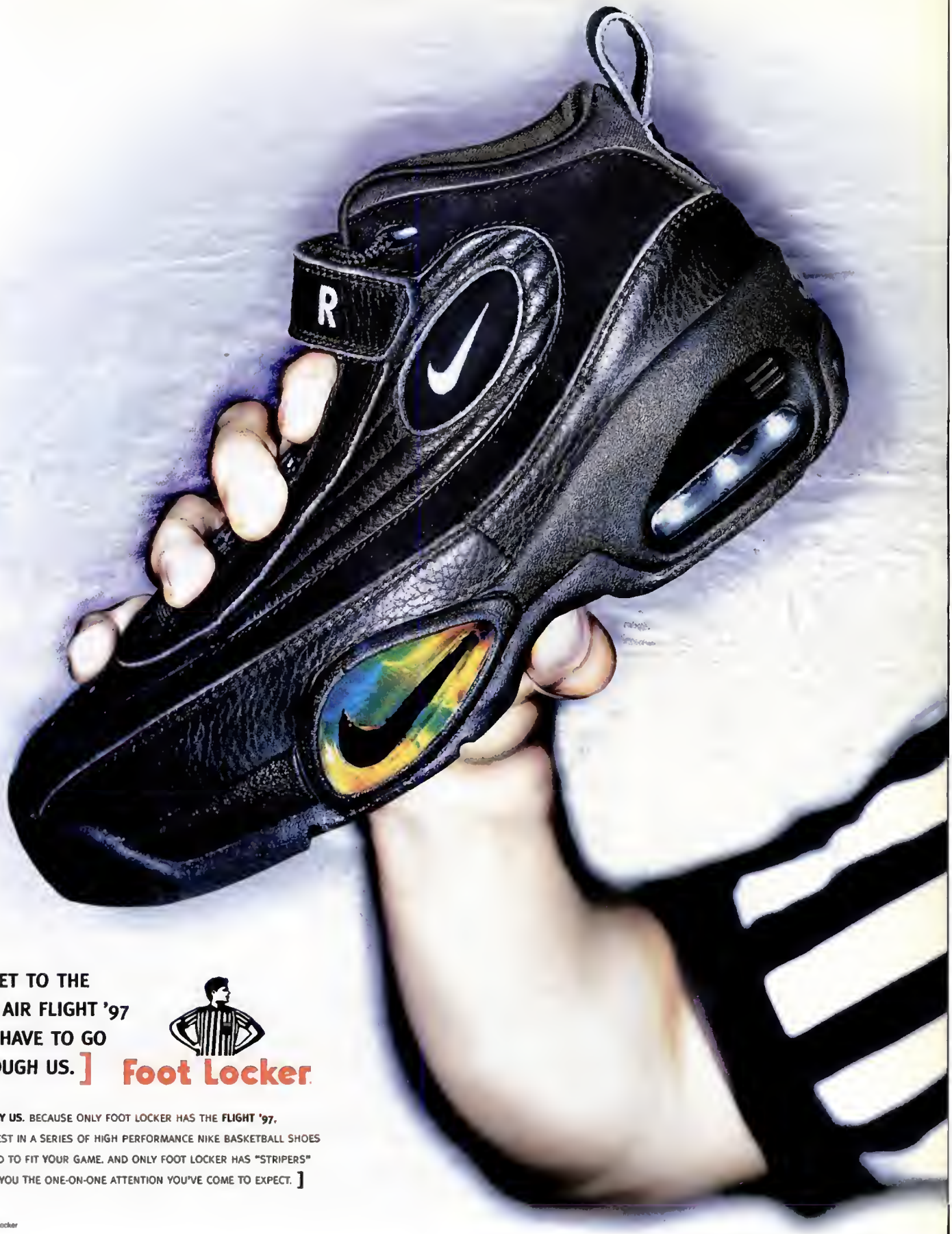
Don't get it twisted, though; if an artist comes half-assed, there could be problems on the real. "We take hip hop very seriously over here," says Hak-Lover, an east London rap publicist. "When artists come over and do wack shows, the crowd gets angry. They throw bottles, rip cushions from seats, and sometimes attack the stage." In 1995 Osirus (a.k.a. Ol' Dirty Bastard) was the only member of the Wu-Tang Clan to show up at a concert. When he attempted to perform the songs of his missing comrades—with a few Beatles covers thrown in—the audience booed like ghosts, hurled bottles like grenades, and ultimately went into flip mode, stealing the tapes containing the instrumentals.

In England, as in America, there's a pungent odor that kicks from the business end of urban music. To date, no black-run hip hop powerhouse like Def Jam or Bad Boy has emerged. Instead, bureaucratic record companies handle rap like novice crapshooters, excited about the potential payoffs but afraid to roll the dice. Even more frustrating is the indifference many label publicists and promoters display toward hip hop. A perfect example is the U.K.'s Super Jam '96, which was held at the Nynex Arena in Manchester and featured Snoop Doggy Dogg, SWV, and Case. The hype was phenomenal, but the person handling press for Snoop made it clear the Doggfather would do no interviews with "black" publications.

Experiences such as this are enough to make the average would-be hip hop artist say "to hell with it" and get a job scratching burgers off a grill instead of wax on turntables. But rather than wave the white flag, an underground movement has taken shape. Old-school groups like the Cash Crew, the London Posse, Hijack, and Gunshot, and soloists like Derek B, Einstein, and Overlord X laid the foundation for rap's success close to a decade ago. The struggle continues with noisemakers such as Blak Twang, a young veteran whose Nas-like street popularity gives the U.K. rap industry no excuse to sleep.

Another MC swimming against the current is Funky DL. After failing to get a recording contract, this 18 year old saved his dough, hit the studio, and pressed up his own joints. His latest, "Promo," is hot to death. The Scientists of Sound caught the ear of DJ Evil Dee from New York's Beatminerz. Dee produced a few songs for them and, because of the attachment, the group now burn on commercial radio. Their cut "What's the Reh Reh?" is supposed to hit these shores soon.

Gazing across the waters that divide our shores is like looking at a reflection of the U.S. rap situation before it was totally overrun by commercial interests. As the struggle rages on between the uncompromising underground and the forces pimpin' it, the scales of art and cheddar are already becoming dangerously unbalanced. Let's just hope our own mistakes are not repeated. *The Blackspot*



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POWER MOVES

strictly business

Not many rappers can even come close to touching Jaÿ-Z. Back in the spring of 1996, just as he was getting his own label, Roc-a-Fella Records, off the ground, he released the gold single "Ain't No Nigga" from his classic first album, *Reasonable Doubt*. Simultaneously, Jaÿ, 27, was serving as svengali to rapstress Foxy Brown, and as the head scribe behind Brown's platinum album, *Ill Na Na*.

But here's a real example of Jaÿ-Z's magic in action. Late one night at a small hip hop show in Washington, D.C., the crowd was getting restless after what seemed like the millionth act took the stage without anyone noticing. When Jaÿ-Z stepped up—Cristal and crew in tow—he effortlessly mesmerized the weary crowd with witty metaphors, humorous anecdotes, and perfectly timed deliveries: Every sweaty person in the room was thirsting for more.

That's what's so wonderful about Jaÿ-Z. While he understands that the art of creating superior hip hop music has nothing to do with record sales, he still realizes it's a business (he

jaÿ-Z

has a multimillion-dollar joint venture in the works with Def Jam). And Jaÿ knows that hip hop *does* has everything to do with style, charisma, and the ability to make others understand his truths. "We used to fight for blocks; but now we fight for blocks with buildings that make a killing." These truths aren't always sugarcoated, but then, neither is life.

Shani Saxon

PHOTOGRAPH BY KAZAKI KIRIYA

Dissed.

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nineties wonder woman

Drop 101 points in the first half of a high school basketball game? No sweat. Lead the U.S. women's team to a gold medal in the 1996 Olympic Games? No problem. Prowl the modeling catwalk before thousands of critical eyes? No big deal. But provide TV commentary for the NBA playoffs and the women's NCAA basketball tournament? Now *that* gets the butterflies flapping in Lisa Leslie's stomach. "Color commentating is the only thing in life I ever got nervous about," confesses Leslie, who started broadcasting for Fox after the Games.

Since her lifelong goal was to win a gold medal, Leslie has been forced to seek a new athletic challenge. She found it in the Women's National Basketball Association, whose summer scheduling allows Leslie, 24, to work the fall modeling season. Her sleek six-foot-five frame is a sight to behold on the runway—but that ain't nothing compared to Leslie's looks on the court. Whether she's dropping a three-pointer or a dunk,

lisa LESLIE

Leslie is so impressive that Nike deemed her worthy of her own sneaker. Not that gym shoes are Leslie's footwear of choice. "I step off the court into what I call my 'Wonder Woman mode,'" she says. "I shower, put on a skirt and heels, and I'm ready to go."

Jesse Washington

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Luke, big baller

SOUTHERN COMFORT

SUAVE HOUSE RECORDS FOUNDER/CEO TONY DRAPER REALLY BELIEVES THAT SLEEP IS THE COUSIN OF DEATH. SO, WITH MUSIC ON HIS MIND AND THE SUN BELT ON HIS BACK, HE JUST KEEPS GOING...AND GOING...AND GOING. ***BY TONY GREEN***

For those used to battle-worn, econo-hoopties or yee-hawing, rattle-trap pickup trucks, the '97 Bentley Continental T is a feel-good cocktail for the auto aesthete in you. Barreling down Houston's Highway 95 in Suave House Records founder/CEO Tony Draper's cool blue honey, it's hard not to drift off into a cream-colored, leather-generated, alpha-wave state.

Draper, on the other hand, is on his cellular, wheeling and dealing—setting up guest spots on his label's video projects, getting promotional machinery rolling—generally behaving as if he were sitting in a sweatbox of an office rather than in the lap of automotive luxury.

"I just can't sit around doing nothing," says Draper, two months after ending a two-year partnership with Relativity Records in favor of a $5.5 million distribution and pressing deal with Universal. "I only sleep about three hours a night. I look at sleeping like, that's time when I could be getting somewhere. It's like batteries: You can either be an everyday bullshit battery, or you can be an Energizer."

In polo shirt, jeans, and high tops, Draper paints a different portrait from the big-baller images that dominate at Suave House: hot-selling artists like Eightball & MJG, South Circle, and Crime Boss, all famous for the molasses-thick, playalistic funk that gets folks open throughout the Sun Belt. The 26-year-old label head, however, comes across like, well, what he says he is: An average brother who plans to sell five million records next year.

"If all this were to stop tomorrow, I wouldn't even trip," he says, "because I love this. I was born on hip hop. I love hip hop and I love R&B. I can always find and develop talent. All I need is a studio and my ear."

Music moguldom has two sides for Draper. The high-fiber, serious side is for the business man in him—the one who spent his early days in the biz crisscrossing the South doing street promotions for his then indie label. But for Tony Draper the fan—the one who was "blown away" by the Def Jam juggernaut in the '80s—the frosting on the cake comes in the simplest of flavors: moving in the same circles as some of his childhood idols.

Draper, a transplanted Tennessean, began his career as a DJ and started Suave in 1988 while working at the local Olive Garden ("I'll make some fettucine that will fuck you up," he boasts). He took his knocks along the way, however. The biggest one coming when he discovered future Geto Boy Big Mike, only to lose him when Mike signed to intracity rival Rap-a-Lot, in 1990. Luckily for Draper, good fortune lay just a state away at a music conference in Memphis a year later.

"I saw Eightball & MJG perform in 1991," Draper says, "and I liked their style. I had a small studio in my house, and they came in and did it all themselves, and went out and sold three hundred thousand units." That album, 1993's *Coming Out Hard*, and its follow-up, 1994's *On the Outside Looking In*, sold nearly 600,000 units in total, and 1995's *On Top of the World* went gold—all with virtually no radio airplay. Right now, MJG is looking at a September release for his solo album, one of no less than a dozen different Suave House projects inked for 1997 and 1998.

"I did seven albums with Relativity," he says. "And I sold two million albums and change. But I did eight hundred thousand albums before I even hooked up with them. So it wasn't worth the extra money I was spending. Nothing against Relativity, but they had their vision, and I had mine."

That vision isn't something you can take in at one sitting. Draper's conversation, for one, comes at you a paragraph at a time—buckshotlike clusters of randomly accessed analogies, maxims, and personal philosophies. Things get clearer after you've been around him and his crew for a while. Draper is big on sports symbolism, speaking of Suave execs in basketball terms (he and "two guard" Ricardo Edwards roll out in Draper's Land Cruiser to videotape construction on Edwards's new home). That team concept even extends to his competitors.

"Rap-a-Lot, No Limit...no way I could be jealous of those guys. When me and [Rap-a-Lot's] James Smith have beef, we choose up sides and play basketball. He wins sometimes, but he cheats." Draper chuckles. "His team carries him." Seriously, though, in an industry where the stakes are so high and the world is so small, Draper steers clear of all unnecessary madness. "I don't have time to sit around starting no bullshit."

Plus, there's plenty of action to go around. When Draper speaks of the southern market Suave House is saturating, he isn't just talking about neighborhoods, towns, or boroughs. He's talking land masses: Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi. So when the day comes that the mainstream decides to sample southern rap, there's going to be gravy enough for everyone. Count on Draper and Suave House to be right there—with biscuits. ▼

TONY THE TIGER
"I can always find and develop talent," says Suave House's Tony Draper. "All I need is my studio and my ear."

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN HARNESS

THE MINDS OF BLACK FOLK

Juice is passion. We have to remember that the root meaning of the word "passion" is "to suffer." If you've got the juice then you have the capacity to feel deeply a wide range of complex emotions.
bell hooks, literary griot

From left: Cornel West, Suzanne Blier, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Kwame Anthony Appiah, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, J. Lorand Matory

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAYSON KEELING

If the cliché fits, wear it. Soon, even that quadrennial collection of hoop-shooting megamillionaires may have trouble keeping the title Dream Team from Harvard University's Department of Afro-American Studies.

The seeds of this dynasty were planted in 1991, when Henry Louis "Skip" Gates Jr. arrived in Cambridge from Duke with a mandate to revive Harvard's moribund black studies program. With persistence, personality, and Harvard's deep pockets, Gates gradually attracted several of the nation's most prominent scholars, most notably philosopher Cornel West (from Princeton) and sociologist William Julius Wilson (from the University of Chicago, his academic home of 24 years).

Now, another challenge remains, one articulated by Harvard's first black Ph.D., W.E.B. Du Bois: To discover whether this modern-day "Talented Tenth" can truly affect the souls of everyday black folk.

POWER MOVES

television [illegible]

When ☥ made a surprise appearance on Bryant Gumbel's final *Today* show telecast tribute in January, impersonating the morning show host in a dark pin-stripe suit and horn-rim glasses while singing a funky medley of Prince tunes, it provided the best example yet of Gumbel's juice and staying power in an industry not known for promoting anchors of color.

bryant GUMBEL

In his 15 years at *Today* (which made him the morning show's longest-appearing anchor), Gumbel, 48, broke down black social science–bred expectations with a jazzlike brilliance. Gumbel used articulation and analysis the way rappers use cursing, as proven by his insightful interviews, his poetic pimp-slap of the Republican Party for disrespecting the late Ron Brown, and his HBO series *Real Sports*. Gumbel also broadened our views of blackness by conquering the "not enoughs": His clear, non-Ebonic speech wasn't "black enough"; his cool demeanor wasn't "street enough"; and his broad interests and cross-cultural ease weren't "real enough." Thankfully, Gumbel moved African-Americans to a more inclusive plane of self-definition and identity.

With a multimillion-dollar contract, a prime-time magazine series debuting on CBS this fall, and his own production company, there's no doubt Bryant Gumbel will continue to reshape, restate, and realign what African-American achievement is.

Eugene Holley Jr.

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more than a lil' bit

Provocateur Lil' Kim seems like a bitches' brew of sex, car keys, and double-digit figures. She's not who you think she is. *By Karen R. Good. Photographs by Dana Lixenberg*

The kitchen has always been a place of reverence in lives of black folks. Cooking as meditation, table as communion, sweat lodge, and confessional. My neighbor Mary Alice once likened it to the womb.

This kitchen is in Christopher "Biggie Smalls" Wallace's home, a small condo tucked away in Teaneck, N.J. where Lil' Kim often stays, along with Biggie's mother, Voletta Wallace, and members of junior M.A.F.I.A. This kitchen, a most appropriate place for our gathering, me and Lil' Kim.

As her platinum album, *Hard Core*, reveals, Kim, at 22, challenges our notions of race, class, and sublime. Kim ain't feminist, she ain't ladylike, and she ain't in the ghetto anymore, up and out like the last episode of *Good Times*. She be a by any means necessary black girl breaking all the black

THE BLUEST EYE
"This is my first time goin' blond. I wore different color wigs—what else was left? Next thing, I'm gonna cut this out, wear my own hair, and go back black."

Copyright

wimmin rules: *Madonna? So what? We don't do the things white folks do. We have a hottentot history to consider.*

Kim is listening, but she won't take all the weight her detractors demand. "They so quick to just outright dog us—'y'all this and y'all that.' For one, *y'all* not even talkin' *to* us. We're just tryin' to make a better life for ourselves. So they cannot say that the music is killin' us. Say what it really is."

We have a hottentot history to consider.

WELL, I'LL BE

If it weren't for my childhood friend Cherie Amour Jenkins, it's not certain that I would understand Kimberly Denise Jones. Like most black girls under five feet, Cherie was cute, babied, underestimated. Her own beauty escaped her, mostly; the mirror didn't reflect it, nor did her name. (What good was the French language if you couldn't speak it? What good is a sappy Stevie Wonder song your ainte used to sing?) Beauty was certainly lost on her mama, who named her. (*Just like her strung-out ass*, Cherie often said, *namin' me after some got-damn song.*) As a sort of apology for *their* child, Cherie's grandparents kept her in Gloria Vanderbilts, Gucci belts (with Louis Vuitton on the flip), and a thick gold chain. They tried to compensate for the love her Mama couldn't give, and for her daddy, who didn't bother.

An occasionally well-deserved "fass-ass" usually preceded or succeeded Cherie's name, especially when comin' from the mouths of her friend's reluctant mamas, who knew of her brief past. Name stayed in folks' mouths so much, Cherie—pitied, praised, and damned—just knew she haddabe grown, and acted accordingly. Like the day Yolonda, in front of God and ev'rybody at the black table in the cafeteria, hocked: "Fuck you, Cherie! You ain't nothin' but a *biiitch* noway."

"Everything everyone heard me on, I wrote," Kim says. "I write. He helped me a lot, but how can Biggie give someone a personality?"

To this, an uneasy pride gathered in Cherie's bones, forcing her to stand. "Well," she spoke directly, neck recoiling snakelike. "*Then I'll be the* best *bitch.*"

MOTHERLESS CHILD

Kimberly Denise will not entertain shame, though she often celebrates survival. "Y'all remember this book called *Rainbow Jordan*?" she asks. "That was one of the best books I ever read when I was young. I'd fake like I was readin' *Sweet Valley High*, but *Rainbow Jordan* reminded me of myself....

"*My mother name me Rainbow... say it sound like pretty colors and there's a pot a gold at the end....I lie to keep my family situation in check; how the reason I'm back and forth with Miss Josie is 'cause my mother be workin' outta town. Lotta people will mouth your business to the world if they ever peep your personal secrets. Like when I went to the circus and saw a man walkin' the high wire and keepin' his balance... Ha! Ask* me *about it. I do it everyday.*"

You don't need a lot of details about Kim's childhood to know where she's coming from. The facts: Grew up in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. Mother is one Miss Ruby Mae Jones-Mitchell, who has all the grace and dignified articulations of a woman from Brooklyn by way of the South. Left when Kim was eight years old, still swinging lunch boxes and cradling dolls.

"My moms is my friend, but I raised myself," says Kim. She is fiercely protective of Ruby. "People don't know that she was basically livin' out of her car when she went through things with my father. She feels that guilt. She knows that she left me there."

Father is a former Air Force man, oftentimes abusive to Kim and her older brother. Kim twice left her father's house. First, she ran away at 14, after he "broke fool" when she cut school; then a year later when he remarried and kicked her out. He called Kim recently to ask her to "tone it down a little bit" in regards to her comments on him in interviews. "I was, like, Daddy, are you mad because it's true? You don't have those days anymore—hello?!? I'm a grown-ass woman." Afterward, Kim sighs, he asked for an autograph for a friend.

SEX EDUCATION: GHETTO STYLE

He laughed / Told me he bought a new Path / Could he come over right fast and fuck my pretty ass..../ Tryin' to impress me wit' your five new stones / I'll give you ten G's nigga if you leave me alone.
—Lil' Kim, "Not Tonight".

"Let me tell you," Kim says of this dual devaluing of the sexes and of what she feels is the American Way. "Sex...money...is power...to me. It's not power alone, but you wanna have money to get the girls. To me. Men like what women like. Or they learn to like it."

But Kim's had some issues to reconcile. Classic dark-skin, ghetto-bred black-girl issues of self-esteem. Body as profit. Style wars. Absence of sisterhood. Believing the men who useta call her ugly. "They all liked the same women," she says. "They always like that light-skin, European-lookin' girl. And I never was her.

"I like a real subtle guy who's gettin' paper," says Kim. "A father figure, because me and my father weren't really that close." She pauses. "Like Biggie—he sheltered me. I like a protector. Fathers don't let nothin' happen to their baby girl."

NIGGAS BLEED

"Um, it was like 3:30 in the mom in', and I was gettin' my hair done 'cause I had a show the next day. Some of my friends had left, and four minutes later, they bangin' on my door. I was, like, What the fuck just happened? My girl Shaka was, like, 'They just killed Big in L.A.!'

"I just stared at her. Everybody started cryin'. I was, like, What the fuck is y'all cryin' for? Biggie is fine. Y'all know how rumors go. Shaka was screamin', 'Yo, is you crazy?!?' I was, like, You're fuckin' crazy. Nothing is wrong with that boy." Then Lil' Kimberly Jones sat down and calmly said, "Iysieata, come do my hair."

What is the love of a mistress? Jezebel. Gypsy. Audacious. Ambitious. Faith Evans was the Wife whose love was quiet; her tribute to her late estranged husband, "I'll Be Missing You," is an international hit, and her rendering of "Walk With Me, Lord" brought tears to the eyes of mourners at his funeral. Kim loves loudly, explicitly. She is the mistress who, *chiille*, showed *out* at the service.

The family begged a quiet procession through Bed-Stuy; but it was, instead, a revival, with a thousand-fold congregation of the lost-found reciting "Hypnotize" as hymn. Kim did not peek through the tinted windows of a limousine; rather, she sat exposed, though meekly, in her Jeep, peeking between fingers that, in vain, covered an expression of suffering and pride. And as she passed, because her love was so unapologetic, because Kim was so familiar, from the multitude, a plaintive cry arose!

What are the words of a mistress? "I wanted to be with him, and he knew that it couldn't happen. That was my heart," she demands, each emphasis a pound, "my mentor, my boy. And you're absolutely right, I was a mistress. But I hated the fact that that is what I stood for." Later, she will confess: "I put him before Him, you know?"

Kim steadies. "He ain't dead by hisself. We'll be there soon. We're livin' blind." She looks away. "Why can't a motherfuckin' black person live?"

* * * * *

Me an' T'Yanna (TeeTee), Biggie's three-year-old daughter, sit together on her daddy's stairs. Hands cupping chins, we watch Kim's photo shoot:

TeeTee: Why Lil' Kim dye her hair?
Me: I dunno. You like it?
TeeTee: Um, yeah. [*Pause*] But why she dye it?
Me: I guess she liked it. Do you know what color it is?
TeeTee: [*Leans over and whispers, amazed*] *Yellow.*

TO BE OR AIN'T

"I'ma *stay* that bitch."
—Lil' Kim, "Queen B@$#H"

"You know what I notice about you?" Kim says to the photographer after the third "one more." "You be tellin' fibs." But for a photographer, Kim being tired is a good thing. Kim is much more of a woman when she's not trying to be one. She gives none of that pigeon-toe, teen-magazine nonsense—not in five-inch stilettos she don't. "Honey," the stylist says, "she is walking like a drag queen."

Without Biggie in Kim's life, people often wonder if her career will nosedive, especially because consensus is that he wrote her rhymes. "Everything everyone heard me on, I wrote," she says. "I write. He helped me with a lot of shit, but how the fuck can Biggie give a person personality?"

He did, however, create an image that Kim is analyzing. "It's the only thing I feel like disassociating myself from now, really," she says. " I still like the sexual thing, but I ain't no ho."

Like most black girls under five feet, Lil' Kim is cute, babied, underestimated. "People just baby me so much. I don't never get to see me bein' a woman. I'm here sayin', Y'all don't let me handle my own business. Y'all don't show me the ropes. Y'all don't say, 'Kim, feel it out.' Y'all say, 'Kim, this is what you're gonna do.' " Nevertheless, right now, she has no regrets. Without her success? "Mmm," she ponders. "Where would I be? Either coffin or C-74 bound."

No matter how much she was influenced, however, there is still "thirty percent of Lil' Kim" in Kimberly Jones. "And that's nevah gonna leave. I got a lot to conquer. I ain't at peace. When I get at peace, y'all gon' know.

"I have to live. That's all. Mature. Just like Big said, if he was to sit up there and talk about robbin' and stealin' like he did on his first album, he'd be playin' himself. Well, I ain't got to fuck for car keys and double-digit figures, youknowwhati'msayin'? It got to go somewhere else now. I have to let it....I have to live. I just have to live." ◘

STREET LIFE
"A woman like me from the street, we let our pride...well, we don't wanna show that some things really hurt us."

WHITE CAMISOLE BY CALVIN KLEIN UNDERWEAR, JEANS BY JEANS COLOR & GABBANA

POWER MOVES

ganja guru

From the chronic-soaked rhymes of Snoop Doggy Dogg to the blunted-izm realities of Redman and his tical-tootin' homeboy

dennis PERON

Method Man, the puffing of wicked weed has long been an illicit source of pleasure in the hip hop community. But San Francisco activist Dennis Peron, founder of the Cannabis Buyers' Club, has turned sticky buds into a political movement. As one of the drafters of Proposition 215, a law that permits the sale of medicinal marijuana to anyone suffering from illness (like AIDS, cancer, and glaucoma), Peron is a hero to some—and an enemy of many.

When Proposition 215 was voted onto the stat[illegible] law books in Novembe[illegible] 1996, a few local politi[illegible] leaders, most v[illegible] California Atto[illegible] Dan Lungren [illegible] Dianne Fein[illegible] fight the ru[illegible] always be [illegible] laying in w[illegible] "They may [illegible] something a[illegible] they can't."

As a lifelo[illegible] of living a "plea[illegible] weeded existenc[illegible] was inspired by th[illegible] related death of h[illegible] Jonathan West, i[illegible] begin dedicating [illegible] those suffering m[illegible] who use pot to [illegible] pain and stress. "Wha[illegible] started out as b[illegible] marijuana," he says [illegible] become about co[illegible] sion and love."

Michael A. Gonzales

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classic example

The O'Jays are back, bringing

Standing onstage dressed in lime-green suits so loud you can hear the material screaming, the O'Jays—chocolate baritone Eddie Levert, mellow tenor Walter Williams, and new booty Eric Grant—are bringing down the funk at Sony Studios as if the Love Train itself were roaring out of the station. As the "Hard Rock Live" camera crew hover in front of the stage, a kaleidoscopic audience of young soul aficionados and older folk who *remember when* delight in the O'Jays' flawlessly orchestrated boogie.

With 20 albums to their credit, these stalwart singers have helped set the standard for soul music since they embarked on a remarkable recording career 40 years ago. Unlike their black pop counterparts from the Motown generation who focused on sedate love songs, the O'Jays went beyond passions of the flesh and touched on social issues as well, helping to create the smart, sophisticated sound that permeated the 1970s on the wings of renowned producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. After four platinum and six gold albums, the O'Jays are betting that their latest project, *Love You to Tears*, their first since 1993's *Heartbreaker*, will break new ground while covering all their old bases.

But it isn't merely their explosive stage show that makes the O'Jays giants among men. "It was a combination of having timeless lyrics and being a well-rehearsed group," says Tony Toni Toné's dreadlocked D'Wayne Wiggins. "Their music was not only pleasing to the heart and the ear, but to the soul."

Group leader Eddie Levert, 55, and Walter Williams, 54, are both Canton, Ohio natives, and had been childhood friends long before they shared a career. In 1958 the pair joined with Eddie's brothers, Tommy and Andrew, to create the Levert Brothers, a gospel ensemble whose songs were broadcast on the local radio. "But one night Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers came to town," Walter says. "The next day, eight groups formed. We were one of them."

They renamed themselves after a Cleveland disc jockey, Eddie O'Jay, who, in 1960, became the group's first manager. "He tried to get us signed to Motown," recalls Eddie, "but Berry Gordy told us at a breakfast meeting one morning that he would be taking fifty percent of everything off the top. We had a big laugh about that and ended that meeting."

Taking their show on the road, the O'Jays relocated, in 1961 to the calm of L.A., where they sang backup at a local recording studio and began performing in flashy, neon-lit Las Vegas clubs like Dunes and Thunderbird. "We also did dates around L.A. where we performed as the Coasters, the Drifters, or any other popular group that couldn't make their own shows," says Eddie. "Anything to pay the rent."

In 1967 they began a beautiful collaboration with

he same ol' soul with a new jack twist. Get on board. *By Michael A. Gonzales*

Gamble and Huff that led to the famed Philadelphia International Records, the powerhouse label that once counted Teddy Pendergrass, Billy Paul, and MFSB among its artists. There, the O'Jays would shine like diamonds for damn near a decade, generating hypnotic hits like 1972's "Back Stabbers"—the first No. 1 single for both the label and the group; 1973's "For the Love of Money"; 1975's "I Love Music"; "Message in Our Music" (1976); "Use ta Be My Girl" (1978); and other classic songs recorded at the famed Sigma Sound Studios.

On *Love You to Tears*, the O'Jays don't sway from the formula that has made them mainstays in R&B, but they do update their sound, '90s style. Gerald Levert (Eddie's son and head of Global Soul, the O'Jays' new label home) and his creative partner, Edwin "Tony" Nicholas, produced several tracks on *Tears*, including its divine first single, "What's Stopping You." Keith Sweat contributes as well, adding background vocals to "Baby You Know," which he coproduced.

The junior Levert is banking on this meshing of old- and new-school R&B to score big across generational lines—a feat that the Isley Brothers' platinum comeback last year proved was possible. "The kids listening to radio today need to know their history," Gerald says from his home in Ohio. "I think a lot of young entertainers have lost what this is all about—a love for the music."

Eddie, Walter, and Eric have spent most of this warm, breezy day doing radio and television appearances. Now, they're at ease in Sylvia's Restaurant in Uptown N.Y.C., and Eddie's easy laughter hangs in the air like the famous eatery's kitchen smells. Female patrons swoon, sending their children over with greetings. Walter wraps his lips around a piping hot piece of fried chicken. Eric's face reflects a certain contentment as he sips an iced tea.

The newest O'Jay (he joined them in 1995) smiles unashamedly, clearly excited about the prospect of "earning his stripes" during the group's next artistic phase. "I feel like I'm blessed," Eric, 40, says, his eyes dancing. "I'm learning from the best." Eddie smiles. "A lot of these kids think they're doing something new," says soul's elder statesman. "There's nothing new under the sun. It's all an extension. You can't create your own world. You have to create *you* being part of the world." ◘

Juice fills in a tall glass with ["a"?] twist of zip for your lip when making a sweet deal. Juice is following when you need to and leading when you supposed to.
Bernie Mac, funnyman

WE BELIEVE THEY CAN FLY

Juice is the tart, sweet liquid, thick and loose, that trails down my chin and my front, my hands and my arms, when I bite into a full ripe Caribbean mango.
Alfre Woodard, cinematic force

A turn of the head, a sway of a hip, or an arch of the back can communicate pain, celebration, tranquility, and passion in ways that make words unnecessary. Dance, the truest and most sensual form of expression, uses the body as a vessel to transmit the feelings of the heart and the desires of the soul. Whether they represent classical ballet, jazz, modern, or hip hop, seven storytellers—(clockwise from top) red-hot Laurie Ann Gibson (former Fly Girl and video choreographer), Jorge Pabón, Antoine Judkins, and LaRhonda Ragland from *Jam on the Groove*, the electric Desmond Richardson (American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey), Adesola Osakalumi (also from *Jam on the Groove*), and rising star Christina May (Juilliard School of Performing Arts student)—tell us tales old and new, established and evolving. Take a listen.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HOWARD SCHATZ

shock jockstress

wendy WILLIAMS

Wendy Williams smiles when you ask her how much juice she's got. "It's surprising to me when [artists] say they're as happy to meet me as I am to meet them," she says coyly. Surely even Williams must know that she is every urban publicist's worst nightmare. Williams's show on New York's (WQHT) Hot 97 is by far the city's highest-rated afternoon radio program; it's filled with virulent and juicy gossip of the highest order. Her favorite topic? Who's gay. And she's pointed the finger at everyone from R&B singers to record execs.

But her scandal-mongering is not limited to exposing rappers' undercover sex lives. She's featured tales of Lil' Kim's boosting designer bikinis from Bloomingdale's (a charge Kim denied during an on-air argument with Williams) and has suggested that she knows exactly who fathered Lauryn Hill's baby.

The real problem, according to one record company Willie, is that Williams's gossip is often laced with truth. "She's been discussing 'the Eddie Murphy situation' for years, and look what happened. That's what makes her such a threat."

"I don't see what I do as any different from [what] the white gossip columnists do," says Williams. "But because I'm the only one [in the hip hop community] talking, I'm the target of all this hate. The artists and record executives avoid me like the plague; but I do it for the fans." *Jeanine Amber*

YOU CAN DIDDY BOP THROUGH CHI-TOWN ON IN-LINES STRAPPED TO YOUR HANDS, RACE THE EL BACKWARDS WEARING A JET PACK WHILE BUSTIN' THE BANKHEAD BOUNCE WITH DA BRAT AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T DONE A THING UNTIL YOU DO THE DEW.

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LOOKOUT BELOW!

Playing the dirty dozens with some fallen cousins

Arsenio Hall: Not even va-va-Vivica could rescue his sitcom from falling off harder than *Knots Landing* and *Good Times* combined. Temporary layoff? Make it permanent.

Martin Lawrence: With the mind of Ol' Dirty and the palms of Mr. Whipple, he's been buggin' like an overbooked roach motel. Yo, money, Tisha says squeezin' her Charmin ain't charmin'. And what about slipping off to Jamaica with a young around-the-way fillet? Seems he's taking the title of his latest flick, *Nothing to Lose*, too seriously.

Eddie Murphy: C'mon, that "I was just giving him a ride" story didn't even impress legendary journalist Geraldo Rivera. Sweet dreams, Mr. Raw.

Geraldo Rivera: Get off O.J.'s guest list. You're not welcome, hombre.

Kathie Lee Gifford: Ain't nobody from Ellis Island slaving in them sweatshops. What's next, a joint venture with a certain company favored by Heaven's Gate cultists? **Frank "Shoot the Gift" Gifford** is saving some other damsels in distress. Step off.

Death Row Records: Suge's playing handball in Alcatraz, Tupac is rhyming over heavenly harpsichord loops, and Snoop's album suffered from severe Dre deficiency. And speaking of the Good **Doctor Drizzay**, he needs to stay *Aftermath* class and get some help, 'cause that compilation just didn't add up.

***New York Undercover*:** When the stars hold out for raises and they fire one of them instead (i.e., Michael DeLorenzo), it doesn't take an Esther Rolle to figure out that the show is on the skids. The Psychic Friends Network is hiring, brother.

Bob Dole: No, he wasn't courting the punk vote with that dive off a campaign platform last September. Dole's plunge gave new meaning to the term "falling off"—and that was before he got waxed by one of the shadiest presidents in history.

Tempestt Bledsoe: She did her thing with Bill Cosby, but now she's going out like Bing Crosby. Who stole the soul?

Dennis Rodman: Dissing Mormons, kicking a cameraman in the nizzuts, and showing off buttocks at every opportunity—that's just Dennis being his usual Menace. But when the Worm isn't collecting his usual quota of rebounds—Spud Webb could have got more boards in the NBA Finals—we can't help but wonder if it's not just the outside of his head that looks like Jell-O.

MAIN PHOTO: PHOTOFEST. OTHERS FROM TOP: STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA. BARRY TALESNICK/RETNA. ARMANDO GALLO/RETNA. ERNIE PANICCIOLI/RETNA. BILL DAVILA/RETNA. MAU[illegible] MICHAEL [illegible] PHILLIP DIETZ/AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS. JOE MARZULLO/RETNA. [illegible]

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Ernest Dickerson
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FUTURE SHOCK

Innovative textures and colors create a modern feeling this fall. *Photographs by Tajima. Styling by Derick Procope*

Black double-breasted pantsuit and pink turtleneck sweater, both by Yohji Yamamoto

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Cream microfiber star embroidered jacket with faux-fur cuffs and collar, multicolored short paisley skirt, and gold chain waist belt, all by Ozbek

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Blue tie-dye velvet dress with scarf neckline by Ozbek

Brown three-piece speckled suit and brown iridescent buttonfront shirt, both by Jean Paul Gaultier Homme

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Black silk chiffon tunic
with pallettes by Jean Paul
Gaultier Femme

Red/gray Euro-jersey tricolor tube dress and blue Eurojersey arm chaps, both by John Bartlett

Copyright © Vibe Magazine

Brown faux-fur coat by Yohji Yamamoto, multicolored bias cut jersey sweater and black wool jersey pant, both by COMME des GARCONS HOMME PLUS by REI KAWAKUBO

Gray organza tunic and gray ribbed wool mini skirt, both by Miu-Miu

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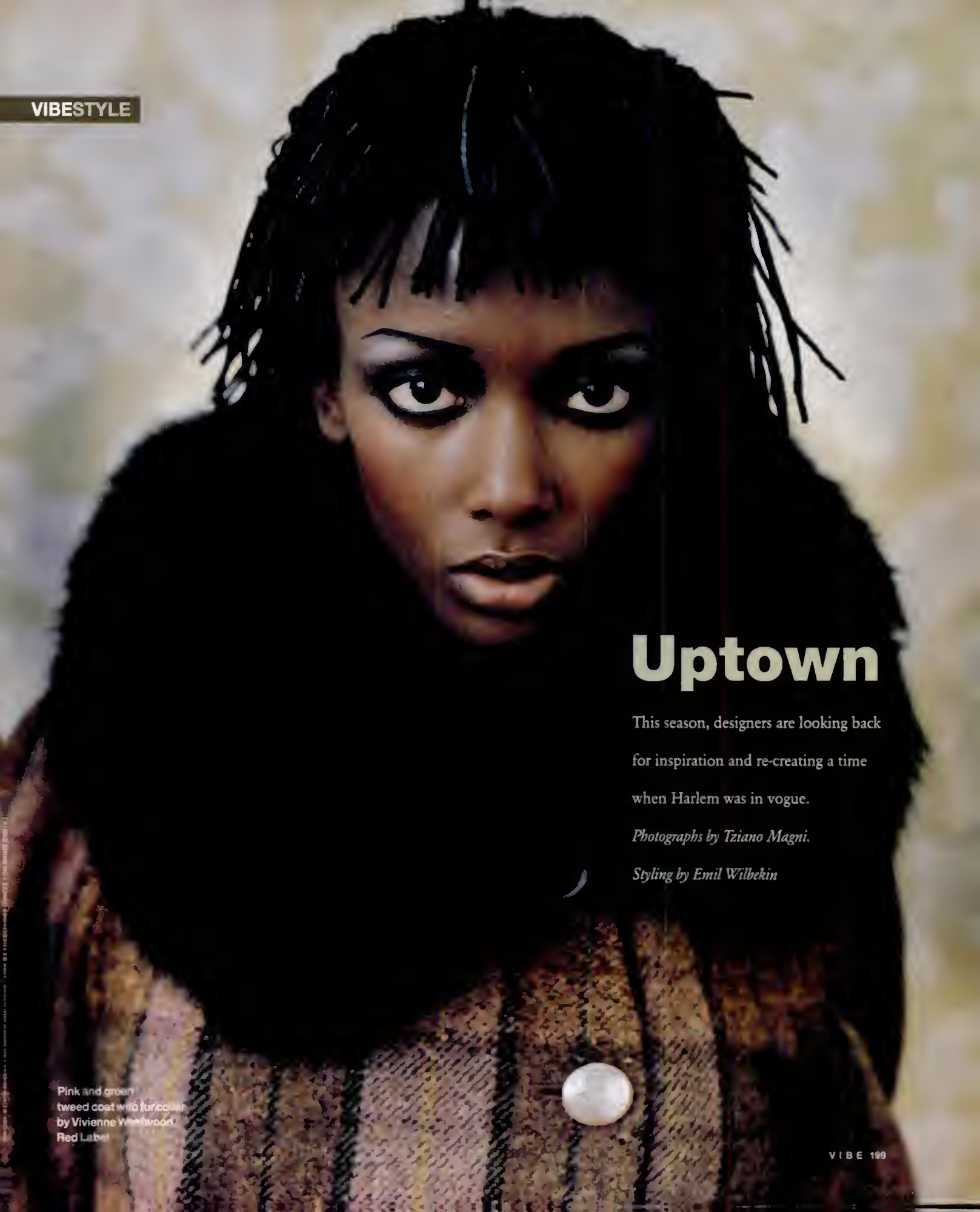

Uptown

This season, designers are looking back for inspiration and re-creating a time when Harlem was in vogue.

Photographs by Tziano Magni.

Styling by Emil Wilbekin

Pink and green tweed coat with fur collar by Vivienne Westwood Red Label

Gray wool two-button suit by Alberto Biani, men's blue and white cotton dress shirt by Polo Ralph Lauren, hat by Makins; red and black pinstripe suit and red wool polo sweater, both by Jean Paul Gaultier Homme

Brown stripe viscose/wool jacket and brown stripe tuxedo pant, both by Giorgio Armani; white cotton short-sleeve dress shirt by Dolce & Gabbana, navy ascot by Brooks Brothers, hat by Makins

Copyright

Fuchsia frill wrap dress by Ghost, shoes by Kenneth Cole; chocolate houndstooth wool one-button suit by John Bartlett, black cotton/poplin shirt by Patrick Cox, tie by DKNY, fedora by Makins, shoes by Kenneth Cole

Brown wool suit by Dolce & Gabbana, hat by Makins; black wool jersey-shape jacket by Vivienne Westwood Red Label, men's white cotton short-sleeve shirt by Dolce & Gabbana; black wool dress by Dolce & Gabbana

Silk floral wrap dress by Moschino Couture, gloves by La Crasia, shoes by Patrick Cox; red and black suit by Jean Gaultier Homme, shoes by Kenneth Cole

Navy wool pinstripe single-breasted three-piece suit, white cotton dress shirt, and navy silk jacquard tie, all by Polo Ralph Lauren, navy wool fedora by Makins

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Red and black pinstripe suit and red wool polo sweater, both by Jean Paul Gaultier Homme

Brown wool double-breasted suit by Dolce & Gabbana, brown wool windowpane polo sweater and brown leather boots, both by Patrick Cox, brown wool hat by Kangol

Grey wool two-button suit by Alberto Biani, men's blue and white cotton dress shirt by Polo Ralph Lauren, hat by Makins

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THE Stylist
DESIGNER FASHION

Brave New World

Miuccia Prada is changing the way people think about dressing. **Photographs by Hugh Hales-Tooth. Styling by Kevin Stewart for One**

In 1913, Mario Prada established Fratelli Prada, a luxury leather goods company specializing in trunks and suitcases. Now, some 85 years later, his granddaughter Miuccia has taken the family name and revolutionized fashion. Prada, which has boutiques in New York, Bal Harbour, Fla., Costa Mesa, Calif., and Hawaii, launched a menswear collection in 1995 that was based on function and simplicity. They now offer techno-fabric suits, wool blue jeans, jersey parkas, and waterproof nylon trousers that are appropriate for the city or the country—clothing that's made to look *and* feel good. According to Miuccia, Prada should be a style that "sinks in over time rather than at first glance."

Previous page: Camouflage pants, tank tops, boots, and accessories, all from Weiss and Mahoney, N.Y.C.
This page: Ebony belted leather jacket, sand cargo pant, loden poplin Oxford shirt, loden poplin tie, ebony rugby shoes with side buckles; ebano zip-front anorak, ebano gabardine ski pant, military green flannel Oxford shirt, oregano flannel tie, black rugby shoes with side buckles; military green three-button single-breasted suit, loden Oxford shirt, loden poplin tie, ebony leather trapper boots, all by Prada.

WHO WYKEHIS SA RICHTER COSTAIN EOS AND HYSLEY PRODUCTIES
HAIR MAKEUP BY MICHAEL COSTAIN FOR WIS MASTER ASSOCIATES

Ardesia flannel ski jacket, fine wool V-neck sweater, gray wool trouser, anthracite flannel tie, black patent lace-up shoe; anthracite stretch flannel suit, ardesia V-neck sweater, white stretch poplin Oxford, grey flannel tie, black patent lace-up shoe, anthracite flannel belt; black wool jersey hooded 3/4-length coat, gray cardigan sweater, white cotton poplin shirt, gray flannel trousers, diagonal stripe tie, black patent lace-up shoe, all by Prada.

Blue double-faced single-breasted jacket, white cashmere turtleneck, flannel trouser, black patent lace-up shoe; blue techno gabardine single-breasted jacket, blue techno gabardine trouser, white cashmere turtleneck, black patent lace-up shoe, blue ribbed zip sweater, white turtleneck, blue denim stretch trouser, black patent lace-up shoe, all by Prada

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Runway Report

Once again, music seems to be influencing fashion. This fall, rock 'n' roll style—lots of black leather, spiked stilettos, and Pat Benatar hair—was all the rage on the catwalks from John Bartlett to Jill Stuart, DKNY to Daryl K. Now we just have wait and see what our '90s music superstars do with these clothes....

Versus by Gianni Versace

Hugo Boss

Calvin Klein

Gieffeffe by Gianfranco Ferre

The Scoop

Now that fashion has become about as accessible as a Big Mac and a cup of Starbucks coffee, designers need to supply the masses with stores to purchase the clothing shown on *House of Style*, *Fashion File*, *Style with Elsa Klensch*, and all the other outlets highlighting fashion seven days a week, 24 hours a day. So, boutiques—stores focusing on a single designer's vision, aesthetic, and merchandise—seem to be the latest trend. On the West Coast, Hugo Boss opened a flagship BOSS Hugo Boss Shop on North Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. On the same wavelength, DIESEL opened the San Francisco DIESEL flagship in the Union Square district. In Las Vegas, Giorgio Armani will open a new Emporio Armani store at the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace over Labor Day weekend. Back East, Vivienne Tam set up shop in Manhattan's sexy SoHo. New Yorkers are waiting *patiently* for the new D&G by Dolce & Gabbana store, also in SoHo, the new Dolce & Gabbana spot on Madison Avenue, Marc Jacobs's SoHo space, Costume Homme's new store in SoHo and a Louis Vuitton shop on 57th Street. And New Yorker Calvin Klein opened a new CK shop in Milan last spring. Talk about international easy access.

Emil Wilbekin

Stylist DESIGNER FASHION

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FOR MY FAMILY.

"I loved the look on my family's face when they saw me in my Dress Blues."

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"I look at what I've already done here and I know I can do anything I want to."

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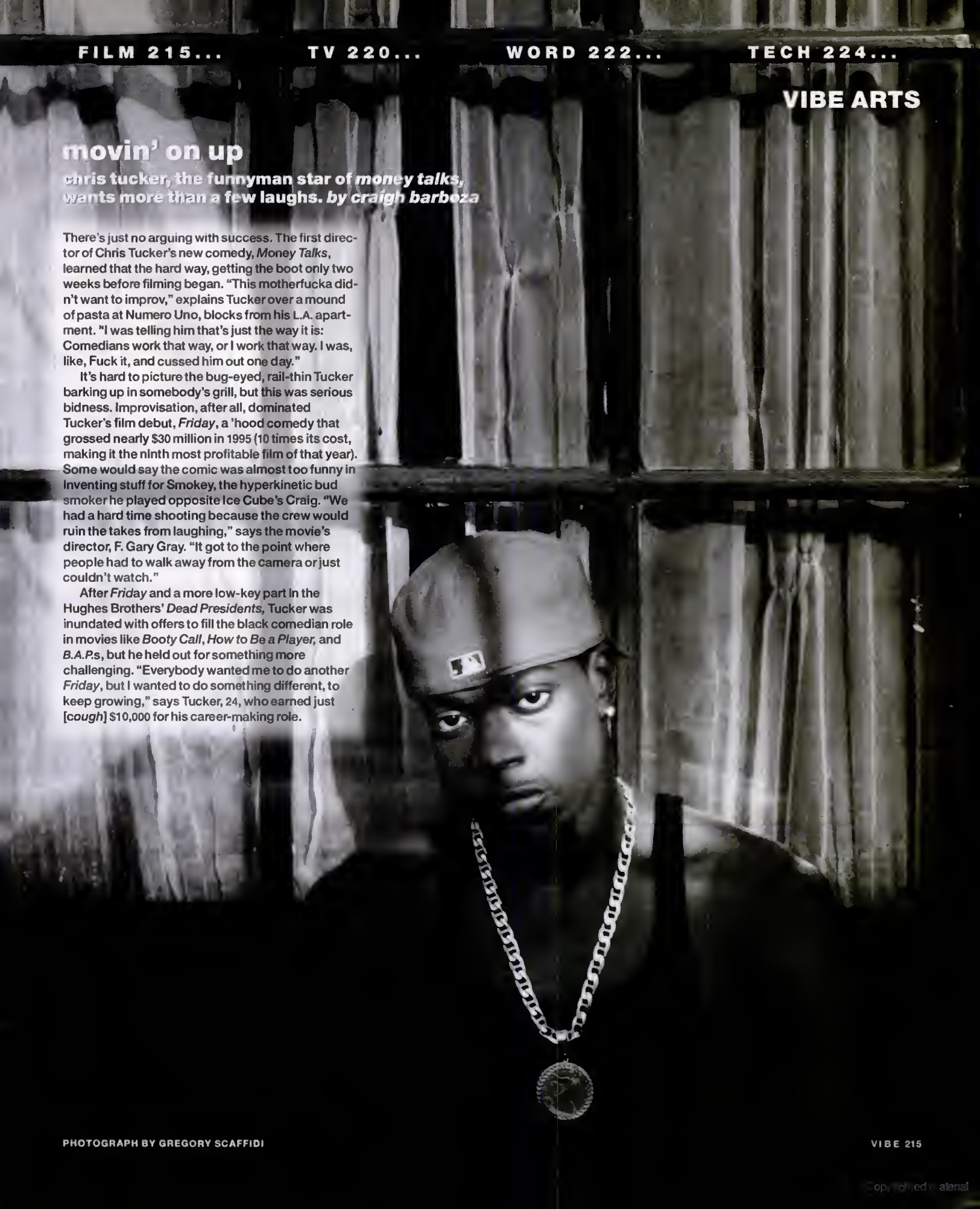
movin' on up

chris tucker, the funnyman star of *money talks*, wants more than a few laughs. *by craigh barboza*

There's just no arguing with success. The first director of Chris Tucker's new comedy, *Money Talks*, learned that the hard way, getting the boot only two weeks before filming began. "This motherfucka didn't want to improv," explains Tucker over a mound of pasta at Numero Uno, blocks from his L.A. apartment. "I was telling him that's just the way it is: Comedians work that way, or I work that way. I was, like, Fuck it, and cussed him out one day."

It's hard to picture the bug-eyed, rail-thin Tucker barking up in somebody's grill, but this was serious bidness. Improvisation, after all, dominated Tucker's film debut, *Friday*, a 'hood comedy that grossed nearly $30 million in 1995 (10 times its cost, making it the ninth most profitable film of that year). Some would say the comic was almost too funny in inventing stuff for Smokey, the hyperkinetic bud smoker he played opposite Ice Cube's Craig. "We had a hard time shooting because the crew would ruin the takes from laughing," says the movie's director, F. Gary Gray. "It got to the point where people had to walk away from the camera or just couldn't watch."

After *Friday* and a more low-key part in the Hughes Brothers' *Dead Presidents,* Tucker was inundated with offers to fill the black comedian role in movies like *Booty Call*, *How to Be a Player,* and *B.A.P.s*, but he held out for something more challenging. "Everybody wanted me to do another *Friday*, but I wanted to do something different, to keep growing," says Tucker, 24, who earned just [*cough*] $10,000 for his career-making role.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GREGORY SCAFFIDI

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movies

movin', continued

His patience paid off when Luc Besson called with a part in this summer's sci-fi adventure *The Fifth Element*. Starring opposite Bruce Willis, Tucker turned in a wild performance as Ruby Rhod, a flamboyant, futuristic megastar with so much hair, flair, and attitude, he'd make Dennis Rodman jealous.

With *Money Talks*, a $25 million action comedy, Tucker tackles his first leading role as Franklin, a car-wash con who teams up with a headline-grabbing reporter (Charlie Sheen) to thwart the plans of international diamond smugglers. Daring the audience not to laugh, Tucker goes from belting a Michael Jackson song to masquerading as Tony Montana in a single scene ("You wanna play rough?! I slap people for fun, mane").

Written by Alec Sokolow and Joel Cohen (*Toy Story*), the movie had been collecting dust for years when Tucker snatched it up and brought it to New Line. The studio then bought the rights for Tucker, who went home and began a massive rewrite, seasoning the dialogue and adding a street sensibility. "My character was, like, selling tickets at the stadium and shit," says Tucker. "I was, like, Hell nah. I took it to the car wash because that's where mothafuckas come in and out and handle business."

As important as the $2 million Chris says he earned for *MT* was the shot to serve as executive producer—a position he exercised to get the film reshoots, flashy cars, a hot soundtrack featuring Barry White and Faith Evans, a more collaborative director (music-video auteur Brett Ratner), and one big, fiery explosion at the Coliseum for the climax.

Like Jim Carrey or Robin Williams, Tucker is an extremely physical, high-energy comic—a virtual walking cartoon. Onscreen, he's volatile and full of surprises yet also strangely lovable. But what's made him *him* is his trademark voice—a high-pitched, rapid-fire instrument honed first at home, where, growing up the youngest of six, he often "ran his mouth for attention."

That mouth served him well at Columbia High School, in Atlanta, where he got his start hosting talent shows. After graduation, the underage comic snuck into a local comedy club, bluffed his way onstage, and walked off with a standing ovation. The impressed club manager signed him up to do eight shows a week for a meager 50 beans. Soon after, he moved to L.A., where he worked the comedy circuit before graduating to his first high-profile gig on HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*, in 1992.

Money may be talking these days, but it doesn't appear to have spoiled Chris—at least, not too much. First thing he did when he got paid was move his parents into a new home and set them up with a pair of hot wheels. He then purchased a newly built French-style house for himself. A half hour from Hollywood, it's a spacious six-bedroom with a high-tech recording studio, where he's currently producing a new comedy album to be released this year in conjunction with a stand-up tour.

In the meantime, he's taking meetings with Hollywood hotshots like Quentin Tarantino and plotting his rise to the top. "I'ma do something really different than what other comedians have," says Tucker. "I'ma always be with an all-star cast, and sometimes I'll take the seat down and let somebody else shine. But I'll always have a good-ass role. I ain't gonna let other mothafuckas get all the light." Let's just hope that if he hooks up with Quentin, he lets the director keep his job.

daredevil

Please allow me to introduce Spawn. He's not exactly a man of wealth and taste, but he is a demonic humanoid who's been charged with leading Satan's militia in its quest to vanquish mankind. Those unfamiliar with Spawn—a character hailing from the top-selling comic book—will get a crash course this summer with New Line's $43 million, live-action urban fantasy. Like HBO's recent animated *Spawn* series, the film is sure to add considerable heft to the character's already considerable cachet.

Before his encounter with Beelzebub, Spawn was known as government agent Al Simmons, but was slain during a mission at the hands of his treacherous boss, Jason Wynn. Simmons then sold his soul to the devil because he was aching to be reunited with his bombshell wife, Wanda, and because he wanted revenge. Cast back to Earth five years after death, he finds himself endowed with supernatural powers and a grotesque form. He also finds his memory has been nearly wiped out, and his old lady shacked up with his best friend and a brand new baby.

If anyone knows Spawn's torment firsthand, it's Brooklyn-born actor Michael Jai White, who embodies him onscreen. "The difficulty was generating a sense of sympathy for this character," says White. "You can sympathize with a grocer who makes a mistake, cheats on his wife, and tries to fight his way back. But a man who's a government assassin, who goes to hell and comes back?"

Michael Jai White as Spawn

***spawn's* michael jai white portrays the first african-american comic-book hero on the big screen**

After a critically acclaimed performance as Iron Mike in 1995's HBO biopic *Tyson*, the 30-year-old White scored a coup as the first African-American comic-book hero to grace the silver screen. He soon realized, however, that the superhero not only had a messy résumé but an even messier costume. Each day of shooting, White had to endure two to four hours of prosthetic makeup applications: a full-body rubber suit pasted to his skin; a mask that restricted his breathing; and almost opaque yellow contact lenses that stung his pupils.

"Spawn is the most tragic character I've encountered in any cinematic production," says White. "He's dealt such a bad hand in his deal with the underworld. Every time he uses his powers, the closer to death he becomes, so he has to try not to use them. If that's not Shakespearean, I don't know what is."

Andrew O. Thompson

IT WORKS EVERY TIME.

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movies

dr. snakeskin's HOME VIDEO VIEWS

spike lee's *get on the bus* isn't the same old story

Eleven years have passed since Spike Lee sparked a revolution at the nation's multiplexes with the release of *She's Gotta Have It*, the first in a series of controversial films dealing with the concerns of African-American life. Since that time, I've taken a hit off every joint Spike has passed around. I got a decent buzz goin' on *Do the Right Thing*; but most of the time, his shit just made me cranky and paranoid.

Given this, I'm surprised to find myself writing that *Get on the Bus*, his latest film to be released on video, is out-and-out fuckin' genius.

Why? Because the man wrings an engaging and intellectually stimulating narrative out of...*a bus ride.* Have you any idea how difficult it is to find dramatic tension in a situation where people simply sit? Focusing on a group of bruthas who take a week-long, cross-country trek from L.A. to the Million Man March in D.C., Spike successfully tackles a number of provocative issues, such as homophobia and intragroup racism, without his usual heavy-handedness.

Get on the Bus also creatively reworks parts of classic films like *Midnight Cowboy* and *The Defiant Ones*. For instance, instead of a white and a black convict being chained together—like in *The Defiant Ones*—there is a troubled teenage son shackled, by order of the court, to his formerly absentee father. The implication is that the real struggle isn't about black and white, but about black men reestablishing links between themselves.

What impresses me most, however, is how Spike evokes, through dialogue, the spirit of Minister Farrakhan without a single image of, or word from, the man himself. He keeps the struggle in the hands of the people instead of falling into hero worship.

Though Spike Lee's films haven't done all that well at the box office in recent years, he and his art have clearly matured. With *Get on the Bus*, we get a pipeful of good opium instead of the usual stick of skunk weed. *Darius James*

187

WARNER BROS.

Plotwise, things are pretty straightforward: Samuel L. Jackson plays a Brooklyn science teacher who relocates to L.A. after surviving a near deadly assault from a student. He pulls substitute teacher duty in a Hollywood hell of a school, facing off against wild, disinterested students and cynical administrators. What makes *187* interesting is 1) the darkly apocalyptic look and feel, brought on by odd camera angles and lenses usually reserved for music videos and 2) Jackson, who works overtime, creating a character that's part saint, part burn-out, and part madman. By the end, how-

Jackson

ever, the script wanders, things take a predictably violent turn, and this fresh spin on an old inner-city story turns out to be not so fresh after all. *Adam Leary*

career girls

OCTOBER FILMS

It's not an easy thing to follow up a hit like Mike Leigh's *Secrets & Lies*. And while his latest, *Career Girls*, isn't *Secrets*, it is classic Leigh—a well-performed character study about two college roommates reuniting after 10 years. Today Annie and Hannah are thirtysomethings with the usual concerns about work and men, but in flashbacks they're revealed as the oddest of couples. Hannah is a maniacally belligerent smart aleck, while Annie is a

Cartlidge

painfully shy Cure fan with a very bad case of dermatitis. The quirky, tic-filled performances by Katrin Cartlidge and Lynda Steadman reflect the brilliantly improvised realness that's always a main ingredient in Leigh's work. Though *Career Girls* is a light film that probably won't have the same wide appeal as *Secrets*, it's good to know that success hasn't spoiled (or distracted) Mike Leigh. *Gary Dauphin*

soul in the hole

ASPHALT FILMS

You stupid muthafucka! What d'ya mean I can't curse my own muthafucking player!?" screams street basketball coach Kenny Jones at the start of *Soul in the Hole*. This outstanding documentary chronicles one hot Brooklyn summer in the lives of Jones and his team of high school standouts, most notably the gifted but errant Ed "Booger" Smith. Unlike the American-

dream motif of *Hoop Dreams*, *Soul* is based firmly in real life—real *street* life. Filled with slick court maneuvers, comic bickering, and bangin' beats from Wu-Tang Clan and Mobb Deep, *Soul* shows that most of the time 'hood life isn't about tragedy or triumph but about the simple moves we make to stay in the game. *Chiedo Nkwocha*

this world, then the fireworks

ORION CLASSICS

Jim Thompson's crime stories are like movies in 12-point type. Visually dynamic, crafted around action and clever dialogue,

Gershon

classics like *The Getaway* and *The Grifters* have translated nicely from the small page to the big screen.

Unfortunately, former music-video director Michael Oblowitz manages to buck a trend. Set in 1950s California, *This World, Then the Fireworks* presents Billy Zane and Gina Gershon—hot 'n' saucy as usual—as incestuous psycho-siblings trying to con a mark out of a valuable beach house. There's "taboo" sex and liturgical "kill speeches" straight outta *Pulp Fiction*, but an incoherent and unbelievable screenplay generates none of the tension that distinguishes good crime flicks. "A film *très noir*," Oblowitz pretentiously calls his own *Fireworks*. More like a film *très merde*. David Bry

Malik Yoba – East Side Heliport – NYC

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tv

iron horse tales

rosie perez and co. share true rush-hour stories of sex, entrapment, and violence

Every morning, two strangers meet on the A train and feel each other up without ever saying a word. A blond tourist goes through the wrong turnstile and becomes trapped in a deserted station overnight. A hyperactive homeboy grabs a girl's breasts as they pass each other on a subway car, and she chases him down and kicks him in the teeth.

If you live in New York, you'll know that all these things could happen—and, in fact, they did. For *Subway Stories*, executive produced by Rosie Perez, Jonathan Demme, and Edward Saxon, HBO asked New Yorkers to share their subway (mis)adventures, and more than 1,000 letters poured in. Writers and directors—including Seth Zvi Rosenfeld, Abel Ferrara, and Ted Demme—crafted the tales into ten vignettes that feature rising stars including Sarita Choudhury, Danny Hoch, Michael Rapaport, and Lili Taylor. The show is scheduled to debut August 17.

Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*) wrote and directed a lyric piece about the intersection of a sax player, a cantor, and a girl (Motown artist Taral Hicks) who sings her heart out to her dying mother on a pay phone. "The subway is another world; it's a *zone*," says Dash. "You get ready for it mentally when you go down there, and you don't expect to have an uplifting moment, but it does happen."

Not all the pieces are so lofty. In "Love on the A Train," Perez plays the woman whose morning routine includes getting a hand job from a fellow commuter (Michael McGlone of *The Brothers McMullen*).

It was Perez, a native New Yorker, who came up with the idea for the project; and in some ways, *Subway Stories* is an elegy to her hometown. "I really wanted to show the ethnicity of New York. We help each other, we make mistakes, we connect," she says. "When's the last time you saw an Indian woman [onscreen] when there wasn't a big deal about her being Indian?" she says regarding Sarita Choudhury's character. "And [actor/writer] Danny Hoch—he's a Jewish homeboy! If you live in New York, you know these people exist."

At the same time, Perez says, you don't have to be a New Yorker to appreciate *Subway Stories*. "It's about the human spirit. If you put a subway car in L.A. or Detroit or Texas or Miami, you're going to have the same kind of collisions."

Laura Jamison

video • video • video • video • video • video • video • rerun • rerun • rerun • rerun • rerun • rerun • rerun

shoot: missy

text and photos by Minya Oh

The video set-up at the cavernous Queens soundstage poses no new challenge for Missy Elliott. After her show-stealing appearances on SWV's "Can We," and MC Lyte's "Cold Rock a Party," this time, Missy is center stage. She and director Hype Williams have created a surreal world for her solo single, "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)." In one scene, Missy dons a plastic balloon suit that gives her gyrations the liquid look of black mercury. The effect requires a stylist to jump in between takes and reinflate the suit with a bicycle pump. Hype manipulates the traditional visuals by playing "The Rain" at half the normal speed, making for a humorous sight as Missy and friends, including Timbaland and Da Brat, lip-synch to the slowed-down track. Throughout the two-day shoot, it's apparent that it's Missy's time to shine.

hawaii five-o

Longing for the days when Ho meant "Don"? Heads up, channel surfers, the Big Wave is back: McGarrett, Dano, and the rest of *Hawaii Five-O*'s finest are now smacking their inimitable brand of aloha justice daily on the Family Channel, bringing island flavor (and the best damn theme song ever) to cable's most barren outpost. Lush tropical scenery, awesome guest stars, and the surf cool of Jack Lord has made *Five-O* the longest-running cop show in television history; even in reruns, the hype holds up. And if you're a non–cable guy or gal, *ain't no big t'ing, bruddah*—you may soon be getting your *HI-5* fix in the form of a remake currently being developed at CBS. Break out the poi, boys—it's luau time!

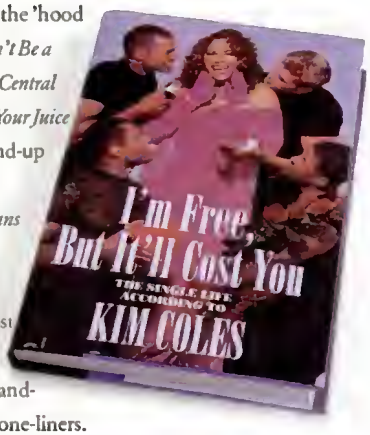
Jeff Yang

Ed Lover – On Top Of The World – NYC

word

two the funny way

The book *150 Ways to Tell If You're Ghetto* (Dell) is the offspring of three actor friends entertaining themselves. While shooting the 'hood genre spoof *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the 'Hood*, stand-up comic Suli McCullough, *Wayans Brothers* costar Shawn Wayans, and *VIBE TV* host Chris Spencer compiled this handbook of cheeky one-liners.



Even the least ghetto among us are bound to crack a smile at a few of these jokes—that is, if they or someone they know a) wears house shoes to the grocery store, b) has appeared on *Ricki Lake*, or c) doesn't have two pieces of ID. Sometimes this little inner-city checklist is just plain corny; other times it's like *watching Ricki Lake*: simultaneously funny and flat-out embarrassing.

I'm Free, But It'll Cost You: The Single Life According to Kim Coles (Hyperion) could be taken as the bitter ravings of a woman who doesn't dig men. The star of the sitcom *Living Single* censures the cheap, the dishonest, and the sexually misinformed. The book details honestly her real-life dates from hell and offers pointers on how to shoot down a brother with a too-big ego.

But Coles, who is as funny on these pages as she is on the screen, writes *I'm Free* in the spirit of good fun and keeping hope alive. Her book abounds with wit and essential sister-girl savvy that can't be repeated enough: Love yourself, become a master bullshit detector, and if he's treating you bad, turn him loose.

Leslie Lockhart

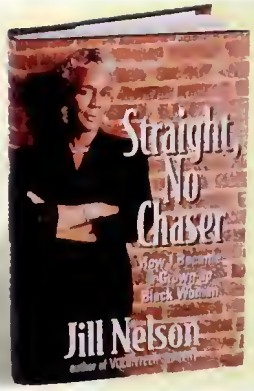
dance goddess

American dance pioneer Martha Graham is revered as a genius, a great artist, and a matriarch in Robert Tracy's new book, *Goddess: Martha Graham's Dancers Remember* (Limelight Editions). Spanning from the 1920s (when Graham's choreography career began) to the present day, the book, via the words of Graham's dancers, transports readers backstage into the exciting, tumultuous world of the Martha Graham Dance Company. Dancers recall how they first

became enchanted by Graham's spell; she revolutionized modern dance by developing the Graham technique, which fused technical ability and drama. They also relive the hard knocks—rehearsing until 4 a.m. without pay, searching for creative identity, and collaborating, under great pressure, with a visionary. *Goddess* revives a legendary era that belonged to Martha Graham; it's a stirring testimonial to an extraordinary life. *Rose-Anne Clermont*

nelson's chase

In *Straight, No Chaser: How I Became a Grown-up Black Woman* (G.P. Putnam's Sons), Jill Nelson, author of 1993's *Volunteer Slavery*, takes an autobiographical approach to elucidating the plights of being black and a woman in America.



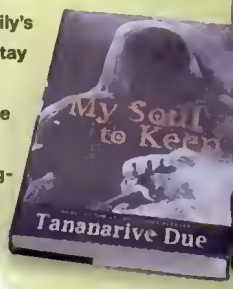
The media's negative images of women of color and obsessive portrayals of slavery sparked the former *Washington Post* columnist into becoming a black political activist. But it was her physically abusive husband who, with a slap to her face, awoke her to the many kinds of violence to which women are susceptible.

Nelson intimately racounts her personal experiences and offers a realistic survival recourse. *Straight, No Chaser* is an engaging and enlightening read not just for sisters but for any downtrodden spirit in search of triumph.

Janelle Rollins

a patriarch's nine lives

The tenuous life expectancy of male black Americans is given a poignant contrast in Tananarive Due's second horror novel, *My Soul to Keep* (HarperCollins). Immortal since the 15th century, professor David Wolde has shed many lives before anyone can get wise to the root of his unfailing vitality. But now, Wolde can't bear the thought of losing the life he shares with his wife, Jessica (a successful Miami journalist), and their young daughter; he feels, with desperate urgency, that circumstances dictate he get them to make the same awful sacrifice he once committed. *Soul* is a suspenseful and tragic parable about one black family's battle to stay together against the weirdest odds imaginable. *Robert Morales*



space titans

Space Is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra (Pantheon) is an exploration of the life and music of the high priest of improvisational space-age jazz funk. Yale professor John F. Szwed re-creates the social environment that shaped the former Herman Poole Blount into an eclectic, visionary genius. Szwed's innovative research explains how astrology, numerology, history, Egyptology, and other esoteric teachings fit into Sun Ra's complex cosmological worldview. Not to be missed by any music lover. *Charlie R. Braxton*

Snoop – The Crib – LA

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tech

industrial espionage

the visual effects wizards at industrial light + magic take the art of computer graphics to the next level. *by chiedo nkwocha*

Mars Attacks!

The Mask

Jurassic Park

Over the past few years, special effects–laden movies have emerged as *the* preferred viewing for audiences of all ages, with humans often cast in a supporting role to a range of computer-generated characters, be they wisecracking wabbits, maniacal aliens, or disturbed dinosaurs. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *Mars Attacks!*, *Jurassic Park* and its sequel, *The Lost World*, as well as this summer's hit *Men in Black* have all dominated at the box office, some of them even claiming positions in the list of Top 10 highest-grossing films of all time.

There is one credit that appears again and again on all these movies: Industrial Light + Magic, the name of the visual effects house founded by George Lucas in 1975, to help convince the studios that his dream–a little picture called *Star Wars*–could become a reality. (He's now at work on parts one, two, and three of the nine-part epic.) There's little doubt this company's got Juice, so, in keeping with this special issue, we tried to reach the source.

To penetrate the famed veil of secrecy surrounding projects at ILM, we decided to use a high-tech, strong-arm tactic. Our unsuspecting interviewee, Miles Perkins, a 28-year-old African-American publicist at ILM who has juice of his own (he's the business manager of acclaimed jazzeteer Joshua Redman and is involved with two bands, one of which, Mingus Amungus, recently won a Bay Area music award), found himself strapped to an electronic chair with a metal sphere orbiting his head, ready to morph him into a Cubist sculpture should he fail to answer our questions satisfactorily.

Miles Perkins

How long have you worked at ILM?

I've been here six years, though not always in publicity.

Are they cool to you at ILM?

Yep, fine; I couldn't have worked for a nicer company. [*The sphere stops in mid-orbit, its lenslike eye blinking skeptically.*]

As a publicist, you must get to see what's really going on.

Absolutely. I have to know everything that's going on with all the different movies. Since I arrived, the company has grown to about nine hundred employees, with anywhere up to eight projects going on at once.

Do you have a budget limit?

Well, a director will come in with a script, and we'll read the script and identify where the visual effects are. We'll then come up with story boards and concept work, and the director will say, "I want it like that." Once we've identified the shots, we'll submit the budget. You have to understand, every time we do something, it's not as if we've done it before–it's always a new problem.

Do you think effects have changed the process of making films?

When someone goes to see a movie now, their expectations are higher. For example, if you put out *King Kong* today, no one's gonna watch it. When that was the state of the art, people used to hide under their seats. A lot of people think of effects as something "grandiose"; but half the effects are things you don't see, like removing stray wires from a shot or enhancing the picture. George Lucas is very good at this. He was in South Carolina, around a lake, and he decided he was gonna shoot there instead of taking the whole crew to New York and shooting Central Park because he figured we could just *add* Central Park.

So, is George Lucas working on the next episode in the Stars Wars *saga?*

Yes. [*The sphere slows down, hanging on to our subject's every word.*]

We hear he's working on three at once.

I believe so, that's the rumor. [*A bead of sweat runs down our subject's forehead.*]

You can't elaborate?

No, I don't want to; I like my job. [*Our subject laughs, nervously, as the sphere prepares to reconfigure his anatomy.*] Though, other films in production include *Starship Troopers*, *Flubber*, *Contact*, *Titanic*, and many more. We're busy. [*Appeased, the sphere resumes circling.*]

Are the computers used specially designed for ILM?

No, the ones we use are widely available–Silicon Graphics–although they are pretty much the higher-end, three-dimensional graphics facilities, unlike the two-dimensional images used by the Mac. We take three-dimensional images so, in the computer, you can spin it around and look at every single object. You can't get the perspective if you are just operating in two dimensions.

Despite the secrecy surrounding your company, you have a book out, ILM: Into the Digital Realm *(Ballantine). What's up with that?*

Actually, there are only two instances when we can't say anything. First, if we're in the middle of a project, and the director does not want his project out there. Someone like Steven Spielberg doesn't want anything out at all; he didn't want any publicity on *Lost World* until fifteen days *after* its release. The second area is with our own proprietary software. [*The sphere stops abruptly, poised. But before Perkins becomes Picasso, we change subject.*]

Is there anything the guys at ILM can't do?

Of course, there are things we can't do in 1997 that we're gonna be able to do in the year 2000. But those things are still undefined. There are some things that can't be done yet, however, like [creating] a completely believable digital human being–i.e., re-creating the pores on a face, getting a closeup of the iris. That's one thing about visual effects, you're always trying to do something that you've never done before.

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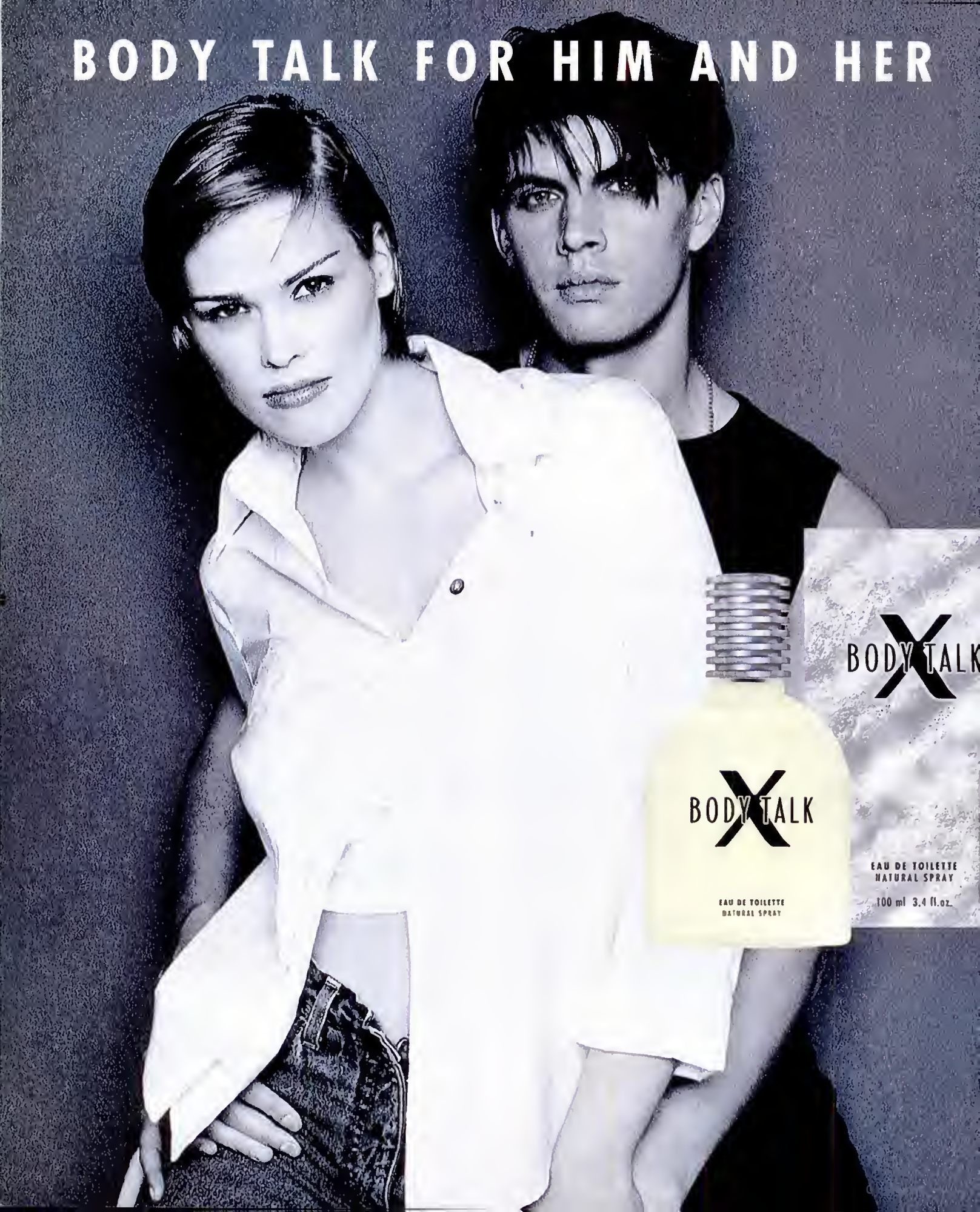
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REVOLUTIONS

MISSY "MISDEMEANOR" ELLIOT
'SUPA DUPA FLY' THE GOLD MIND, INC./ELEKTRA

BY KIERNA MAYO

All of a sudden, seem like everybody wanna be in the back of Missy's 300, kissin' and fondlin'. All of a sudden, seem like everybody wanna be anywhere Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott is. But there's a simple explanation for all the hype: Not since our beloved Biggie has there been a rap artist whose cameos more consistently equaled hits.

What started last year with the now classic "hee-hee-hee-hee-ha" break that she lent to Gina Thompson's coast-to-coast radio smash "The Things That You Do" hasn't stopped yet. Missy freaked the remix for MC Lyte's "Cold Rock a Party." Then, of course, there's her unforgettable appearance on SWV's "Can We," a song she also penned—one of more than 20 songs that she's written for the likes of Jodeci, Aaliyah, and 702, the majority of which appear on gold- and platinum-selling albums. →

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The woman who once sang on trash cans "on the side of the road when I was just a little girl" has developed into one of black music's most promising and multifaceted young artists—MC and singer, writer and arranger. And you can now add to Missy's panorama of accomplishments her extraordinary solo debut, *Supa Dupa Fly*, which will be released on her own record and production label, the Gold Mind, Inc. I guess the question is: What *don't* this sista do?

Well, for one, she no longer belongs to the girl group Sista—the quartet who bumrushed Jodeci backstage at a 1992 gig and auditioned on the spot for DeVante Swing. Under DeVante's direction, the women quickly completed an R&B album that was released in 1993 and was written mostly by Missy; unfortunately, the project was a nonevent.

As a solo artist, however, Missy represents myriad exciting possibilities for sistas in the rap and R&B game. Perhaps more than anyone, Missy is reaping the benefits of the rise of women in hip hop—not to mention the realization of their earning power—having unexpectedly stolen the hearts of a massive cross section of fans in practically no time. And while Missy hasn't relied on T&A, flowing hair, or couture, she's no androgynous throwback (e.g., Lyte, who's all woman now). Missy's a natural—a possessor of that intangible fly spirit that characterizes a true star. And she's a far cry from Slick Rick's very commonplace wet dream of "slim, trim, and also light-skinned." Instead, Missy's big, brown, and bets you like it.

On *Supa Dupa Fly*, the line between hip hop and R&B blurs even more than on the fusion Mary J. Blige set in motion in 1992 with *What's the 411?*, and Missy has accepted the baton with vigor, with Lauryn and veteran Latifah on her relay team. The synergy and cleverness with which Missy and her longtime producer/"Wonder Twin" Timbaland push various styles genuinely strengthens the marriage. Her Busta-like onomatopoetic style, bottomed-out bass leanings, and stop-start rhythms represent nearly every region in the country, including songs of the South (Missy hails from Portsmouth, Va.). Even bass elements rear their heads.

On *Supa Dupa Fly*, the line between hip hop and R&B blurs even more than on the fusion Mary J. Blige set in motion with *What's the 411?*, and Missy has accepted the baton with vigor.

Missy also makes excellent use of the hookup she knows so well—all-star guest cameos. Among the unforgettables: Lil' Kim, who appears on the offbeat, guitar-laden "Hit 'Em Wit da Hee"; 702 on the slow funk "Beep Me 911"; and Da Brat waxing Bone Thug-ish and empowering (in the Brat way) on "Sock It 2 Me": "It's nine-seven / It's the motherfuckin' bitch era / What y'all niggas wanna do?" While some of Missy's rhymes are nonsensical, stream-of-consciousness banter, it's impressive how, at times, she goes out of her way to weave womanist subtext throughout the album. Herewith, Missy's advice to her sistas on "Don't Be Comin' (in My Face)": "To my East Side people / To the West Side / To all my bitches who sat home crying over these niggas / And over these fellows / Shake 'em off like Jell-O."

Supa's sound and feel are what one might call futuristic, considering the inclusion of Timbaland's trademark electronic bleeps and video drones. Missy's many selves emerge at different times on the album: sometimes she's whimsical, sometimes sexual, sometimes straight-ahead MC.

And just in case there's any doubt, consider the killer video for Missy's first single, "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)," and wonder: Exactly what kind of chick dons a garbage bag and big black lips—to sell herself to a public that likes its women in tight things and with pink puckers—and has the audacity to say: "Chill / I got my umbrella / My fingerwaves these days / They fall like Humpty / Chump me / I break up wit' him before he dump me / To have me / Yes, you lucky"? Hell, it's great to know that today's black woman is pushing tomorrow's hip hop.

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DANNY CLINCH

O.C. 'JEWELZ' PAYDAY RECORDS

In 1994, underground champ O.C. licked off a shot at the industry with his now classic single "Time's Up," taking heads to task for seeking mass appeal. He followed it up months later with the stirring debut album *Word...Life*, which was met with tremendous critical acclaim but few record sales. After a three-year hiatus (broken only by his appearance on the second Crooklyn Dodgers record, "Crooklyn Dodgers 2") due to the collapse of his former record label, Wild Pitch, O.C. has returned to drop some gems on 'em—or, to be more precise, *Jewelz*.

No longer rocking the how-many-words-can-I-fit-in-one-measure? flow, O.C. now rides the beat at a more natural pace, sinking into the groove comfortably. Where *Word...Life* was underground angst, *Jewelz* is melodic contentment. Having enlisted the talents of DJ Premier, the Beatminerz, Lord Finesse, Buckwild, O.Gee, and Showbiz, O.C. can lay claim to having one of the tightest production teams ever assembled.

REVOLUTIONS REVOLUTIONS

One bangin' little ditty off *Jewelz* is "M.U.G.," featuring a sedated Freddy Foxxx and a beautiful flute/piano loop courtesy of Primo. Another highlight is "Dangerous," in which O.C. and fellow Diggin' in the Crates crew member Big L melt all snail MCs with their salt-ass rhymes: "I made this cheese / It didn't grow on trees / Can you hold somethin'? / Sure, you can hold on these." The tightest joint on *Jewelz*, though, is the Finesse-produced title track in which O.C. analyzes where he's been, where he's at, and where he's going. Song for song, O.C. falters only once, on "Far From Yours" with Yvette Michele. Horrible singing, a wack beat, and mediocre rhymes prevail, but I guess the Biz was right: "This is something for the radio."

Thankfully, O.C. is still concerned with the decline of rap music, only now he's stopped criticizing and has started to lead by example, unveiling one of the most finely polished *Jewelz* this year has seen. I just hope other rappers have enough sense to follow him. *Noah Callahan-Bever*

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MICHAEL LAVINE

TWISTA 'ADRENALINE RUSH' CREATOR'S WAY/BIG BEAT/ATLANTIC

Even though Twista's been dubbed "the world's fastest rapper" by the Guinness Book of World Records, this brotha doesn't rely on awards to prove his prowess on the microphone. Flipping knowledge and ripping rhythms on his second joint, *Adrenaline Rush*, this rapid-fire lyricist from the west side of Chicago takes us on a tumultuous 13-track journey. The Legendary Traxster (best known for his work with Do or Die) ingeniously handles the production end, while B-Hype makes an unforgettable guest appearance on "Korrupt World." Whether Twista's subject is foes ("Death Before Dishonor"; "Mobster's Anthem"; "No Remorse") or females ("Get Her in tha Mood"), in this musical drama, it's all about survival of the fittest.

Debbi Bass

REVOLUTIONS

COOLIO 'MY SOUL' TOMMY BOY

The style known as gangsta boogie has always been one of hip hop's harder pills to swallow, especially for heads either absent at its inception or located too far East to worship George Clinton or Roger Troutman. But the unpopular middle child between P-Funk-blessed aqua boogie and gangsta rap has a tradition too proud for Coolio to ignore, as evidenced by his third opus, *My Soul*. Now here's a man who knows how to put the *fun* back into funk.

There's enough bounce per ounce on "One Mo" and "Can I Get Down 1X" to satisfy heads from Cali to Cleveland, and this thuggish-ruggish realist's didactic delivery switches from intense ("Nature of the Business") to inspirational ("Homeboy"). But too many witless hooks and too much predictable phrasing make material like "Throwdown 2000" and "Let's Do It" sound like studio outtakes. The churchy "C U When U Get There" tickles the mental fancy, but the ever-present player-hater paradigm reiterates how shallow Coolio's lyric scope can be.

But the greater shame may be in his letting someone show up who shows *him* up, as Ras Kass does on the buoyant "Hit 'Em." Fools better stop hibernating on this phonetic flexmaster, who comes with lines like "Your ultimate adversary / Like white blood cells fighting HIV inside your capillary / I beat that ass blindfolded like a piñata, scary / My prom night I'm fucking Carrie / Have her screaming bloody Mary." However, just as Coolio can't touch Ras Kass's concepts, guests like 40 Thevz can't even match their host's skills.

Despite its blatantly uneven ratio of rump-shaking fluff to heavy-hitting fly rhymes, *My Soul* is the type of lightweight rap album that rakes in enough dough to help foot the bill for the genre's other, more complex, records. Like it or not, pap pays. Plus, *My Soul* proves why Coolio's presence in hip hop's collective voice remains at least interesting: He's not afraid to have fun.

Malik R. Singleton

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REVOLUTIONS

BOOM SHOTS

BY ROB KENNER

Mamas, don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys. Remember Ivan, the innocent country bwoy in *The Harder They Come*? As soon as he made it to the big city, he was off to catch a spaghetti Western at Kingston's raucous Rialto Theater. His fate was sealed from that first night. As he sat watching, in wide-eyed rapture, Clint Eastwood single-handedly slaughter a battalion of low-down varmints, he was absorbing a dangerous cinematic law: "*The hero cyaan dead until the last reel.*" Sure enough, Ivan went the way of most gunslingers—not even a fade into the sunset.

Josey Wales is no hero. But his pedigree in dancehall's roughneck aristocracy is unquestioned. Building on the foundation of Daddy U Roy the Teacher, Josey learned his craft alongside elders such as Charlie Chaplin, Brigadier Jerry, and Early B the Doctor. A lyricsman from the old school, he's quite comfortable chatting for four or five hours straight, mixing ribald humor, wry human satire, scathing political commentary, kooky karaoke, and the Old West shtick that earned him his spurs.

The Colonel of Josey Wales

During the 1970s, the "Colonel" and his bona fide bredren Super Cat cultivated a rapscallion, rude-bwoy appeal, and somewhere along the way developed extramusical reputations to back up their image. "I was the influence of the ghetto," he recalls. "Every likkle guy would say, '*Mi wan' be like Outlaw.*' But their mothers thought that was wrong, because to live like Josey Wales the Outlaw, it's not an easy life.

"Up until now in Jamaica, they say I'm the toughest DJ," he laments. "I am the most misconcepted individual of all time. They create that rep like I would just pounce upon an individual for no reason. It's not like that. But living in the ghetto, certain things go on, and you don't want to take part in it. You cannot be informer or you're going to die. **When you come across the police, the police want you to know he won't take no crap. People might try to take your things. You have to stand up for your rights. In that same sense, you become an outlaw."**

Josey Wales recorded some gems with the Roots Radics Band (collected on the Live & Learn/RAS CD *Outlaw*), in 1986, and cut a slew of memorable sides ("Wrong Move," "Water Come a Me Eye") for King Jammy and other producers. But all his records combined fail to capture his irresistible stage magnetism. Though he can cork a live session till morning without depleting his lyrics inventory, Josey's career was never marked by a massive hit single.

That is until last March, when an unknown gunman shot him in the back, snatched his wallet, and left him for dead in a Kingston bar. To have survived is a miracle. To have been rallied 'round by family and music comrades, a blessing. To bounce back with a country western gundelero ballad about the whole experience and see a hillbilly reggae hit ("Bush Wacked") atop the Jamaican charts is almost ridiculous. But the Colonel's facts are stronger than fiction, and after cheating death, the man and his legend can only grow: "Regrets? I have a few, like the great Frank Sinatra said; but if I and I could live it over again, would only correct a few things. As I say in my song, I prefer to walk with a Bible than a gun. But I like being Josey. Yeah."

RAW BREED 'BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS'
WARNER BROS.

Bronx natives Raw Breed are out in Cali trying to make it big, transplanted but not transforming themselves into Cube clones. With 15 joints and four skit fillers, the trio's second album, *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, features consistently tight, stripped-down production that captures what beats were originally intended for: helping to elevate the skills of a true MC. And songs such as "Pressure" and "Everyday Tactics" supply us with fresh perspectives on ghetto realities and street life.

By harmonizing on hooks and interweaving in and out of one another's flows, Raw Breed manage to sweetly combine what *was* and what *is*. They certainly give you everything the title suggests, adding a few tablespoons of sweet, old-school interaction for additional flavor. ***A.L. Dre***

G.P. WU 'DON'T GO AGAINST THE GRAIN' MCA

The latest Wu-Tang offshoots, G.P. Wu, continue the legacy with their debut, *Don't Go Against the Grain*. Pop da Brown Hornet, June Lover, Rubberband, and Down Low Recka represent the Staten Island Stapleton Projects and explore tales of camaraderie, machismo, and sexuality.

Tracks such as "Things Ain't What They Used to Be," "Underground Emperors," and the white-label hit "Black on Black Crime"

serve as guides to how disturbing the ghetto really is. Another highlight is "Don't Go...," a thought-provoking excursion through the PJ's.

Be forewarned, though: Despite a longtime affiliation with the Clan, G.P. Wu aren't a crew of Wu-Tang disciples. G.P.'s edge is blunter, and their style is more consistent (considering they don't have nine different personalities). So, if you're checking for carbon copies (a daunting task to say the least), you're looking at the wrong squad. *NikkeiDuncan*

GOOCH 'A LOT ON IT'
GEFFEN

Dedicating himself to livin' a player's life, Gooch is puttin' it down for Inglewood, Calif. on his debut, *A Lot on It*. With smooth-flowing rhymes devoid of any insight or depth and R&B vocal fragments that scream West Coast cliché, Gooch runs down the science of hustlin' over ably produced beats by folks such as Sir Jinx and Ike Turner (that's right, folks, Ike Turner!).

Although imaginative concepts are nowhere to be found, *A Lot on It* does have something many records lack: a cohesive structure with sound bites and commentary that articulate the way Gooch perceives things—like it or not. That's risky. And guests such as Kool G Rap, Ricky Bell, and Teena Marie help keep it interesting. All in all, not a bad start. ***Carlos Nino***

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REVOLUTIONS 2NOTUDOYA

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

BY THE BLACKSPOT

In last year's Juice issue, I profiled vocab artist **The Last Emperor**, whose songs, "Bums" and "Animalistic," were (and still are) on heavy rotation in my Walkman. Well, I'm very pleased to announce that Dr. Dre has signed his royal highness to Aftermath Entertainment for an album release early next year.

The smell of gun powder and the clicking sound of unleashed box cutters may come to mind first when MC **Mike Zoot** steps to the mike and recalls the everyday lifestyle of the average Brooklynite. Instead, he travels one step beyond and delivers visions of stoop rhyme battles, bodegas, Chinese take-outs, and Jamaican bakeries into worldwide consciousness. When you listen to Zoot's single, "Service" b/w "High Drama" and "Turn," off his seven-song EP, you don't get caught up in redundant minstrel-drama nor inundated with the bitterness that some people act out to camouflage lack of skill. And *skill* is the magic word for when Zoot provokes asthma with breathtaking lyrics on "Service": "The beat was kinda dope / But the rhymes I couldn't smell / Ain't no dis / Ain't no beef / Ain't no gas / Ain't no gel."

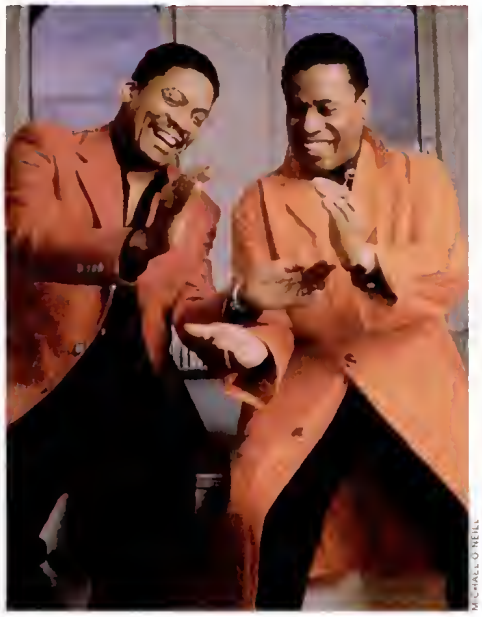
Mike Zoot

To further punctuate the message, **DJ Hi/Tek** (remember Talib Kweli's DJ?) throws in a sample of a scornful Large Professor screaming "Wack nigga rhyming kills a raw beat!" (makes you think twice before stepping into that next rhyme cipher). **Mike shines just as lovely on "High Drama," which features the Mighty Mos Def** lending a hand in a clever commentary on rappers who get too hyped after watching gangster flicks. It may be difficult to pick up the single because of its frequent flights off the shelves, but don't fret. "Service" will be rereleased with a special remix featuring underground rap lords FT of Street Smartz and Tony Ruffin of the Dutchmin. For more information on Mike Zoot and his adventures, call Matt Schilt (a.k.a. FingaTip) at GuessWhyld Productions at 212-535-7807.

How about some old school? If you like it pure, check out **Sacred Noise**, a crew that verbally tie their Timbs with fat laces by uniting the boldness of present-day hip hop with yesterday's experience of rocking a party. Pep (the Funkfreakin' Demon), Reverend Zookness, Diggs (the Technician), and the Don, the DJ of the group, bring in "Noise," the demo's chaotic opener that sounds like party-in-a-can with its scratches and crowd chants (listen for the mentally adhesive hook: "On the crew tip / We are Sacred Noise on the crew tip"). Another stick-out track is "I," which shows all you chin-caressing players how to get your girl snatched up if your game ain't tight. It's time for you labels to dial the math to Slapbox Management (800-SKYPAGE, pin No. 176-3454) and make some noise for you and yours.

Have an ill rhyme over a beat that talented kid down the hill hooked up? Send it to VIBE Magazine, Attn: The Blackspot, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016 for possible review in this column. Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number on the tape—which will not be returned, so don't send originals.

HERBIE HANCOCK AND WAYNE SHORTER
'1+1' VERVE


MICHAEL O'NEILL

Great ageing musicians compensate for what they lose physically with patience and wisdom; therefore, the battle to continue making good music is waged against boredom, not the body. In the case of saxophonist Wayne Shorter and pianist Herbie Hancock, who achieved music godhood back in the '60s as part of Miles Davis's revolutionary quintet, boredom has continually driven each of them to chase the horizon (Hancock's 1962 *Takin' Off*, Shorter's 1965 *Etcetera*).

So now it's 1997, and the question is, What do you do when you've *still* already done it all? Retire? That's ridiculous. If you're a jazz musician, retirement comes when you're nailed in a coffin with your instrument, not when you're 65 and social security kicks in.

If you're Shorter or Hancock, you're still chasing. Unfortunately, though, a summation of the soprano saxophone/acoustic piano duet effort *1+1* is—as Mobb Deep's Prodigy would say—"crazy space shit that don't even make no sense." Out of the 10 tracks featured, the speeds range from slow, stop, or reverse. Tunes like "Memory of Enchantment" and "Manhattan Lorelei" are legitimate cures for insomnia. "Visitor From Nowhere" returns to its home, and the companion track, "Visitor From Somewhere," follows it there. If there's one highlight on *1+1*, it's "Aung San Suu Kyi," on which Shorter and Hancock toy with each other like teenage lovers.

Being eclectic is nothing new to veterans Shorter and Hancock, who both went funk/rock/pop in the '70s. These cats are among the two greatest multistyled musicians in the history of jazz. So it's hard to understand how their reunion for *1+1* could result in such banality. Maybe Kenny G has defamed the soprano sax. Maybe it's too difficult for a piano to be the entire percussion section. Or maybe boredom just got the better of them this time.

OJ Lima

REVOLUTIONS

J.J. JOHNSON 'THE BRASS ORCHESTRA'
VERVE

WILLIAM CLAXTON

For some five decades now, jazz master J.J. Johnson has been the undisputed mack of the trombone. The first player to successfully employ his instrument in service of the bebop revolution, he is simply the godfather of all those who've mastered this peculiar axe (Curtis Fuller, Steve Turre, Robin Eubanks). You may not know him, but you sho 'nuff know the music he's scored for television and film (including *The Mod Squad*, *That Girl*, *Barefoot in the Park*, and *Cleopatra Jones*).

Still vital at age 73, J.J. Johnson has reached a higher plateau with his latest masterwork, *The Brass Orchestra*. A breathtaking collection of 14 tunes scored for the big band (including six trumpets, four trombones, harp, piano, bass, drum, and saxophone), *The Brass Orchestra* is one vibrant, throbbing vessel of rich, coloratura swing. This is how it should be done.

Tom Terrell

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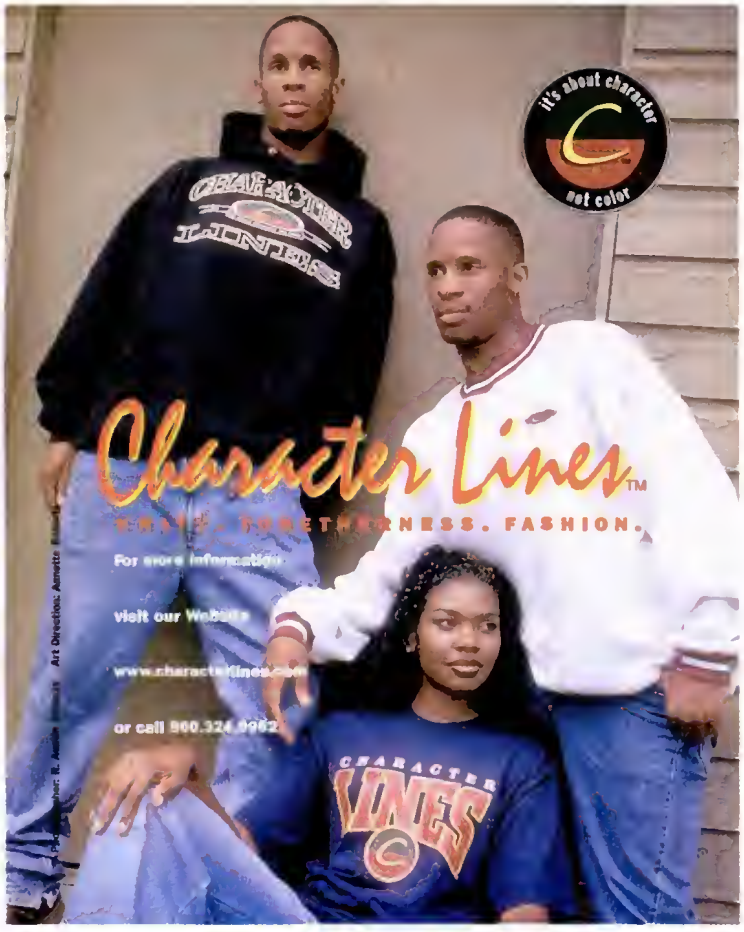

REVOLUTIONS AMONG LOVERS

THE REAL MUSIC

BY GREG TATE

In 1968, the late genius drummer TONY WILLIAMS had the misfortune to invent what we now call fusion. I say misfortune since he was about to miss a fortune, being way ahead of the pack–before, in fact, his previous employer Miles Davis sanctioned the movement with *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. What's now known as fusion was then a novel and adventurous exploration of funky rhythms, psychedelic electronics, and jazz musicianship. Under the name Tony Williams Lifetime, Williams formed a trio with organist Larry Young (a.k.a. Khalid Yasin) and new jack British guitarist John McLaughlin. Their intention was to advance on the improvisatory inclinations of Jimi Hendrix and Cream from a jazz standpoint. The results were the equivalent of setting off a bomb in Times Square.

Even today, their music conforms to no one's set notions of any known music genre. Because there was no formula, the music still sounds fresher than most of what came later in the Official Fusion Era, which often sounded fanatically preprogrammed. What makes jazz the shiznit is the sense of coherent and poignant music ideas being developed in the moment; the players are at the breach of chaos and panic, but, even still, they maintain grace. The sessions for *Emergency*, Lifetime's debut, certainly possess all those qualities.

Tony Williams

Now rereleased on Verve, the two-disc set *Spectrum* provides a recap of Williams's work for the Polydor label between 1969 and 1973. Not until *Emergency* and its follow-up, *Turn It Over*, had anyone heard a bona fide jazz guitarist like McLaughlin attack the instrument so bestially. Clearly influenced by the sonic dice Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Jeff Beck were noisily tossing around the universe, on cuts such as "Vashkar," Brother John's and Williams's sound locked in a whirling dervish–like dance of death that surely informed the great work McLaughlin would later do with Billy Cobham in the Mahavishnu Orchestra.

As for Williams, he is the only one to have married the fleet swordsmanship of the jazz drummer with the nerve-shattering volume and attack of the stadium drummer. What's surprising, though, is how little props Young has received for the brilliance with which he transferred the modal complexity of Coltrane to the Hammond B-3 organ, which, up 'til then, had been stagnating with Jimmy Smith's funky '50s style. *Turn It Over* brought onboard former Cream bassist Jack Bruce, which made for one of the most violent, raucous recordings ever to issue from a noted jazz musician, ranking right up there with the MC5's *Kick out the Jams* and Iggy and the Stooges' *Raw Power* for deafening obnoxiousness.

The two recordings Williams made after Lifetime broke up, 1970's *Ego* and 1972's *The Old Album's Rush*, were less bombastic but still contained minor gems like "There Comes a Time," which is the sharpest song Williams, who couldn't sing and didn't care, ever sang. (Bob Dylan Theory in effect: "If ol' Bob can sing, why the funk not me?") The lyrics are just ill: "There comes a time when you want to be older / There comes a time when you want to be bolder / I love you more when it's over."

All of Williams's releases on Polydor sound like they were recorded for a buck-fifty a pop; so don't expect high-fidelity. But the playing is so ferocious that the grunge don't matter. Hmm. Maybe what Williams invented here wasn't fusion but grunge. What a deranged thought: Tony Williams, the father Kurt Cobain never knew.

ZIGGY MARLEY AND THE MELODY MAKERS 'FALLEN IS BABYLON' ELEKTRA

There have been times during the career of Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers when their music echoed that of their father's and his band—particularly Ziggy's soulful crooning, which, at times, can be downright eerie. But after 10 years of making vibrant Jamaican jams, the Melody Makers have survived the comparisons and forged a unique identity that doesn't imitate their father's style; rather, it raises his spirit.

Fallen Is Babylon stays true to the band's form, mixing programmed beats and loops, traditional roots vibes, raggamuffin, and a bit of hip hop into their reggae bag. "Everyone Wants 2 B" features a gradual, shuffling groove that—along with samples from the 1966 Clint Eastwood film *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, and a guest appearance by fellow West Indian expatriate Wyclef Jean of the Fugees—creates a ghost-town feel. Reminiscent of *The Score*'s "Cowboys," the musical mood fits the track's theme of illusory images. However, the title track's heavy-handed studio sound produces an artificial feel, while the cover of the Impressions' 1965 "People Get Ready" (also recorded by Bob Marley early in his career) is surprisingly good until the DJ-induced celebration gets excessive, downright goofy.

Songs such as "Postman" offer the organic instrumentation we're used to hearing from the Marleys. The track is a strong contribution from younger brother Stephen, who yields the best fruit on the album ("Notice" and "Long Winter"), due largely to his pensive optimism and wide-eyed inquisitiveness. Historically, *Fallen* lies somewhere between 1991's overproduced *Jahmekya* and 1993's roots celebration *Joy and Blues*. And though it suffers from a hint of an identity crisis, a concerted effort would be needed not to enjoy it. *Jazzbo*

SHAGGY 'MIDNITE LOVER' VIRGIN

Shaggy's second Virgin release, *Midnite Lover*, manages to seduce the ladies while also emphasizing his lyric prowess. Older heads will intimately feel the revamped version of Percy Sledge's 1966 "Warm and Tender Love"; while "Piece of My Heart" spotlights the sonorous vocals of newcomer Marsha Morrison. The *bashment* ditty "Perfect Song" features an excellent turn from Maxi Priest, while the euphonious "Geenie" accentuates the harmonies of premier backup vocalists Brian and Tony Gold. In "Think Ah So It Go," Shaggy berates critics "who si dung a dem yard...a draw bad card," while Bob Marley's son Ky-mani lends a hand in an elegant remake of his father's "Thank You Lord." This *Midnite Lover* is worth rolling around with, no matter the time. *Sharon Gordon*

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COMPANY FLOW 'FUNCRUSHER PLUS'

OFFICIAL/RAWKUS

KAMBUI OLUJIMI

The world is coming to an end, and Company Flow have volunteered to narrate the play-by-play. Via a regimen of disciplined off-beat cadences, Bigg Jus and El-P roar against cream-puff R&B/rap goulash.

Funcrusher Plus is the bigger and deffer version of the *Funcrusher* EP independently released in early '96 on the New York group's Official label. Glazed with harrowing, boom-bashing, sci-fi–influenced arrangements from lyricist/producer El-P's twisted cabbage, Co Flow's *Funcrusher* commands attention because, like the West Coast's infamous Solesides crew, these brash do-it-yourselfers create a sound that's definitely their own.

"Collude & Intrude" is a blistering vehicle for the Indelible MCs—a union of Co Flow, Juggaknots, and J-Treds—that evolves like a march into chaos. Bigg Jus goes one step further in his solo salvo, "Lune TNS," a roll call of graf greats from his perspective as a young buck. Even their DJ, Mr. Len, gets to shine on a few interludes.

"Population Control" invites battles over submarine-level octaves and creepy water sloshes. The dreamy "Bad Touch Example" is one of two potential radio cuts, busting out with Bigg Jus claiming "styles so freaky wet, niggas need maxi panty shields." El-P, "the triple-felon MC minus the melanin," rides the fat bass line of "Corners" and drops shit like, "Believe, when I rock even Spock will catch feelings." And oozing with emotion is the disturbing "Last Good Sleep," a personal account from El-P about his abusive stepfather.

In Co Flow's cold, cold world, there's little hope in sight. Their extreme take and the bulk of material may prove monotonous to the weak at heart; but for the brave, pop in *Funcrusher Plus* and pass the Prozac.

Gabriel Alvarez

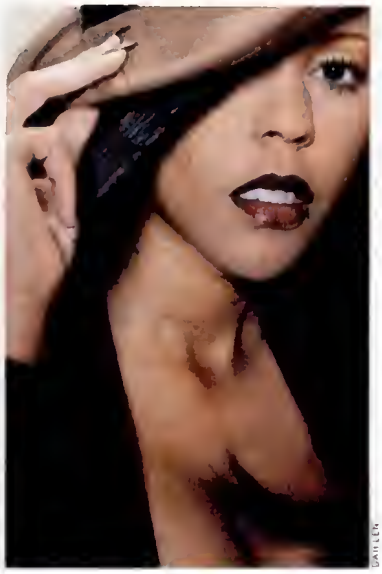
KID LOOPS 'TIMEQUAKE'

FILTER/DORADO

CODY BURRIDGE

By now you should have some idea of the drum 'n' bass movement currently rocking the U.K. But before buying just any record that features "drum 'n' bass" in its title, listen to Kid Loops's debut album, *Timequake*. Displaying a sound ear for melody, Loops (a.k.a. Jamie Lexton) announces his graduation from remixes and collaborations with a collection of witty, intelligent songs. "Wicked Loops," with its rolling bass line and booming drum, redefines rock 'n' roll, while Loops's take on Eric B. and Rakim's "Microphone Fiend" creates a blueprint for rap in the next millennium. Though less for the club than it is for the lounge, *Timequake* is where you should begin your quest to be down. ***Chiedo Nkwocha***

REVOLUTIONS & REVOLUTIONS



DAI LEN

CRYSTAL WATERS 'CRYSTAL WATERS' MERCURY

The postmodern disco diva Crystal Waters is back with her brand of user-friendly house. One listen to her disco-inflected third album soundly confirms why she's been an essential radio and dance-floor staple for the past six years. On her self-titled opus, Waters reaffirms that she's one of very few dance artists who can effortlessly please the hardcore club community and still achieve crossover success without tainting her fun-filled music agenda. *Crystal Waters* is awash with insidious beats that make a perfect foil for Waters's coquettish, ultraslinky vocals. What a delicate, tasty little concoction she serves up.

June Joseph

YVETTE MICHELE 'MY DREAM' LOUD

Yvette Michele's debut album, *My Dream*, starts out with rudimentary impressions about "Summer Love"—nothing more than pure Partridge Family pop. This sonic folly may cause listeners to cast a leery eye over what follows; however, the foxy singer soon erupts into a pleasant strain of lava-laced, mid-tempo cuts, enhanced by Funk-master Flex's seething-hot production.

REVOLUTIONS

Michele's smooth vocals embody the placidity of an inactive volcano, but she propels things on "Only Want to Be With You," the thematic antithesis of her hit single "I'm Not Feeling You." Sadly, though, basic R&B ennui ensues on "Brooklyn," and not even the sweetest voice can save such a song from damnation.

Asondra R. Hunter

SUEKWON

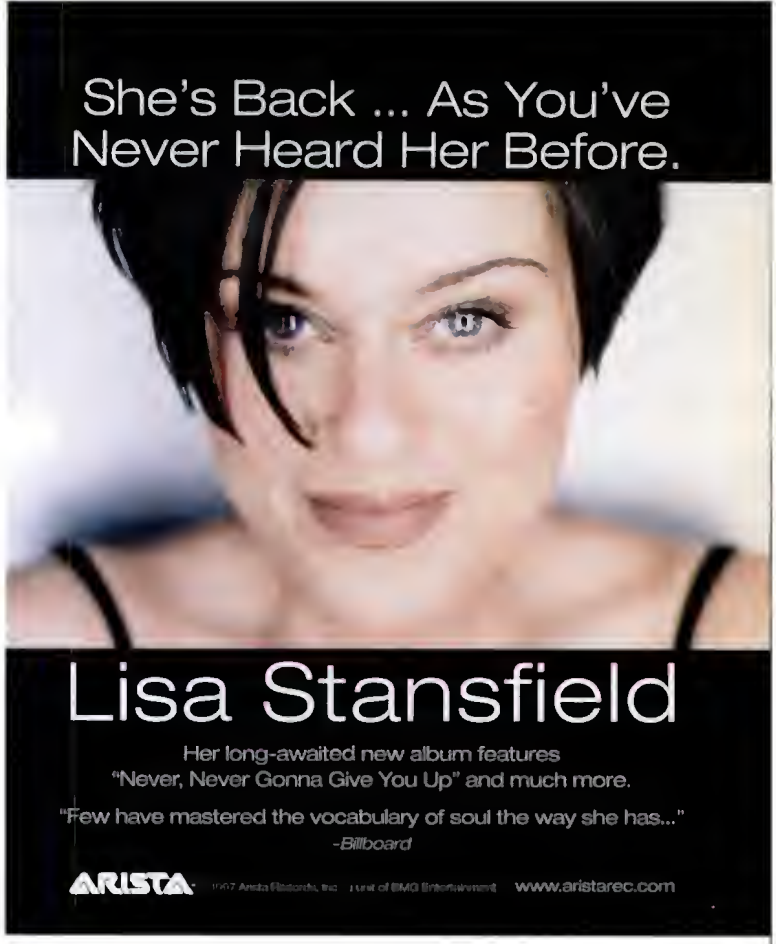
MARK HORN

TARAL HICKS 'THIS TIME' MOTOWN

Taral Hicks's long-awaited debut, *This Time*, is a satisfying collection of ballads and mid-tempo fare guaranteed to have plenty of soul/pop princesses running for cover. Already an alluring onscreen personality (she's appeared in *A Bronx Tale* and this summer's *Subway Stories* on HBO), Taral makes the transition to music in great form, executing each track with an authority and flair that's sure to catapult her onto a level right alongside the big girls.

***This Time* is an easy album to groove to, ably highlighting Hicks's wispy and effervescent vocal abilities. The Narada Michael Walden–produced "I Wish You Were Here," the delightful "Distant Lover," and the title track are especially indicative of Taral's megastar potential. But if her goal is to become a true world-class diva, she'd do well to select more creative, challenging material next time around.**

Gil L. Robertson IV



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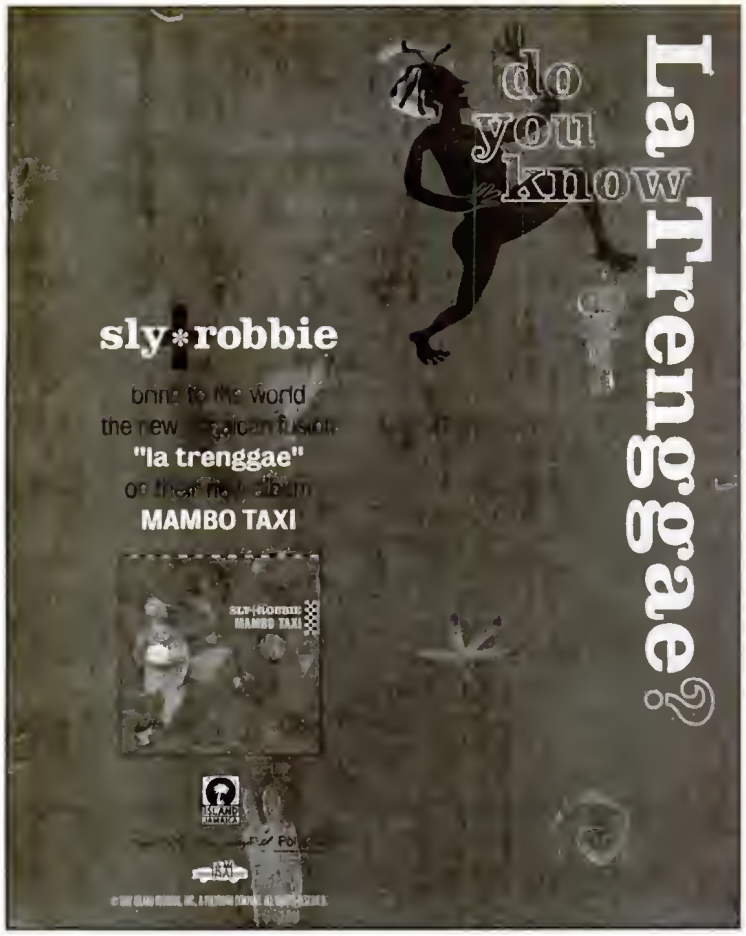


4.0 '4.0'
SAVVY/A&M RECORDS

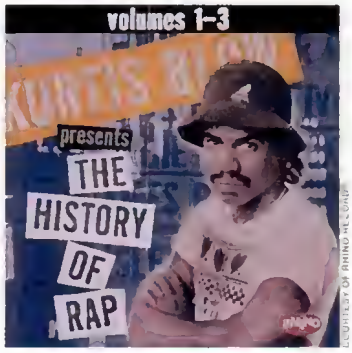
With harmonies as celestial as heavenly hymns, 4.0 trickle forth satiny smooth grooves on their sparkling self-titled debut. Without the B-boy posturing, hip hop cameos, or over-the-top production plaguing so much of today's R&B, this quartet of Atlanta-based Pebbles protégés flawlessly capture the pure essence of love throughout *4.0*'s 14 tracks. With production contributions from the likes of Tony Rich, Organized Noize, and Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, this impressive outing delves into classic influences, atmospheric auras, and down-home southern comfort. The first single, "Have a Little Mercy," is a perfect introduction to a masterful set. Just like in school, 4.0 equal excellence. *Karu Daniels*

KURTIS BLOW PRESENTS 'THE HISTORY OF RAP VOLUMES 1–3' RHINO

In an age when artists freely pillage rap hits past (and, sadly, when 1988 is readily viewed as "old school"), a misguided listenership is in dire need of some history lessons. Depending on your age and your memory, Kurtis Blow may be as famous to you for selling Sprite as he is for classics like "AJ Skratch," "Basketball," and "If I Ruled the World."

Although Blow's *History of Rap* series nobly attempts to inform and entertain, its rudimentary coverage of the obvious is best directed toward the hip hop novice. Volume 1, subtitled *The Genesis*, revisits some of the genre's greatest breakbeats—those, as Kurtis fondly recalls in the musings of his liner notes, that "enabled the B-boys to get off their best moves." And although it laudably makes spectacular tracks like the Incredible Bongo Band's 1973 "Apache," Baby Huey's 1971 "Listen to Me," and Herman Kelly & Life's 1978 "Dance to the Drummer's Beat" available on compact disc for the first time, its real treat is bringing to light such overlooked gems as the Jackson 5's kinetic 1973 interpretation of "Hum Along and Dance."

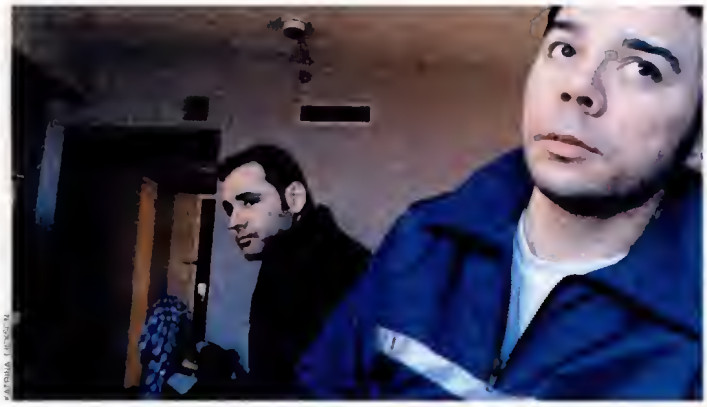
Volume 2, a.k.a. *The Birth of the Rap Record*, predictably covers the era of the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," Afrika Bambaataa & the Jazzy 5's "Jazzy Sensation," and, of course, Blow's own first two hits, "The Breaks" and "Christmas Rappin'." The third and final volume, *The Golden Age*, showcases a number of essential singles (Run-D.M.C.'s 1984 "Rock Box," Whodini's 1984 "Friends," MC Shan's 1987 "The Bridge"), but merely provides a surface scratch. After all, what reasonable overview of rap could possibly exclude "That's the Joint," "Super Rappin'," "Love Rap," "Eric B. Is President," "It's My Thing," or "La-Di-Da-Di" and call itself complete?



On an ideal planet, *The History of Rap*'s crash course would inspire those curious about the music's past to continue exploring. Let's hope so, since, as recent trends have exhibited, artists as well as audiences could display a little more respect for the show in show business. After all, will the world really be ready when generic chickenheads start crooning R&B lyrics over "Rebel Without a Pause"? *Chairman Mao*

THE CRYSTAL METHOD 'VEGAS' GEFFEN

The success of groups like Underworld, the Prodigy, and the Chemical Brothers, as well as MTV's new show *Amp*, is a sign that electronica, a mostly instrumental, technology-based music, is quickly becoming to



the '90s what new wave was to the '80s. Entering this U.K.-dominated genre are the Crystal Method, a southern California–based duo whose pulsating debut is alive with frenetic beats, sensual melodies, and the style's trademark squiggly sound effects. "Trip Like I Do" is a dizzying ride through breakbeat wonderland; and check out the mysterious "Bad Stone" for something a little mellower. Full of sonic extremes, *Vegas* is a musical acid trip, vivid and intense—only better, 'cause you never have to come down.

Andréa M. Duncan

THE SEEDY ARKHESTRA FEATURING CHRIS DOWD 'PUZZLE' ASTOR PLACE/PROFILE

In 1994, keyboardist Chris Dowd quit the L.A.–based punk/funk/ska/rock band he helped start–a quaint little group known as Fishbone–and moved to New York, seeking bold creative challenges. With his roommate, guitarist Hod David (who coproduced *Puzzle*), Dowd assembled the dynamically diverse Seedy Arkhestra, which includes such star talent as the late Jeff Buckley on guitar and background vocals, Joshua Roseman on trombone, Don Byron on baritone sax and clarinet, N'Dea Davenport on background vocals, Joan Wasser on violin, the Brooklyn Funk Essentials' Paul Shapiro on sax, and the Jazz Passengers' Brad Jones on bass.

The music here is mostly mid-tempo ska and roots reggae, though plenty of other influences shine through. The up-tempo "Shing-a-Ling" is reminiscent of "Tutti-Frutti" with Dowd's Little Richard–style exuberance, while "Baby Would You Take Care of Me?" contrasts pleading lyrics with a bright, quirky banjo line and whistled solo. And despite the ska horns, "Flog Your Dead Horse" rocks with Fishbone-ish intensity (though it's filled with anti-Fishbone sentiment), complete with cursing and a searing guitar solo.

The title track features some hard-rock guitar over a nice-and-easy reggae rhythm, while Dowd sings about trying to "fit inside the puzzle" of life and wade through all its bitter experiences. "Burn" follows with lines like, "Up and down the city streets I wander like a stranger / Baby crying in a cardboard box like Jesus in a manger." Heavy stuff.

Dowd's vocals are sometimes a bit over-the-top. Check "A Thousand Tears," which takes a campy, retro approach to the story of a man leaving his lover and promising to return. But on the catchy "How Will I Know," Dowd wrenches with emotion: "Remember last year / Things were very clear / There was sugar in my tears, and you drank them." Seems a bit more Frank Zappa than Frank Sinatra. Seedy? Nah. Think solid.

Judson Kilpatrick

NOTHING TO LOSE
THE SOUNDTRACK
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REVOLUTIONS SHOUTOUVER

1. Don't y'all love the Allen Iverson Sprite commercial in which he's "not playing basketball, not rapping, and definitely not dancing"?

2. Okay, one more "The Sound and the Fury" question: Is Evander Holyfield the new breakfast of champions? **3.** But if we're talking about athletes being "barbaric" and lacking sportsmanship, then can someone please tell us, What is ice hockey? **4.** How empowering is it that Erykah Badu is directing her own videos, including the beautiful "Next Lifetime"? **5.** But will everyone please STOP saying "Peace and blessings"?!? **6.** Who else thought that Eddie Griffin's HBO comedy special was distasteful on account of his "jokes" about the Middle Passage and his Tarzan-ish take on Africa? **7.** If Missy's video "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" (by the indefatigable Hype Williams) ain't the livest joint out, can someone tell us what is? **8.** Who cares how many pages Aaliyah's letter is? **9.** And did Daddy watch Michael Jackson's old "The Way You Make Me Feel" video to prepare for his dance scene in the Biggie tribute "I'll Be Missing You"? **10.** Why, in damn near every song, do K-Ci and JoJo always have to say "Help me sing it"? Shouldn't Mr. Dalvin and DeVante really be asking that question? **11.** Is Frank Perdue the original Mack? He's been kicking chickenheads to the curb for years. **12.** Does anyone really care about the Insane Clown Posse's album being pulled off the shelf? **13.** Why are we still waiting for Large Professor's album? **14.** Why do sprinters think pulled muscles are valid excuses for losing (à la Michael Johnson's getting beat by Donovan Bailey)? Yo, money, the other cat was in better shape than you! **15.** Admit it: When it was first reported that Mariah Carey was linked up with Q-Tip (and that it was a contributing factor in her separation from Tommy Mottola), weren't you just a bit shaken? **16.** We love him almost more than life itself—but did Biz Markie really have to pull up his shirt at the Tibetan Freedom Concert to show us he's been "putting on a little weight, living the good life"? **17.** And was that Beastie Boy Mike D onstage with the multicolored rubber bands in his hair? Or was it Bone Thug Bizzy-Bone? **18.** Nikes are the bomb—but do they have to have, like, 22 individual swooshes on each shoe? **19.** Guest-hosting *Yo! MTV Raps*, acting in the movie *Love Changes*, rapping on Lil' Kim's "Ladies Night"—how fabulous is Hot 97 superDJ Angie Martinez? **20.** Since her record company, EMI, just folded, wouldn't Joi be the perfect artist for Madonna's Maverick label?

Mariah

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Angie

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THE DETAILS

VIBEFashion: "Future Shock"

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Black double-breasted pantsuit $1,920 and pink turtleneck sweater $400, both by Yohji Yamamoto available at Yobji Yamamoto, N.Y.C., Charivari, N.Y.C., and Wilkes Bashford, San Francisco.

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Cream microfiber star embroidered jacket with faux-fur cuffs and collar $1,460 by Ozbek available at Stanley Korshak, Dallas, Theodore, L.A., and Romanoff, Bal Harbour, Fla.; multicolored short paisley skirt $650 by Ozbek available at Untitled, N.Y.C.

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Blue tie-dye velvet dress with scarf neckline $1,805 by Ozbek available at Lissilaa Boutique, La Jolla, Calif.

page 193

Brown three-piece speckle suit $1,870, brown irridescent buttonfront shirt $215, both by Jean Paul Gaultier Homme available at Traffic, L.A., Holt Renfrew, Toronto, Calif., and Saks Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C.

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Black silk chiffon tunic with pailettes $1,880 by Jean Paul Gaultier Femme available at Bergdorf Goodman, N.Y.C., Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills, and Marshall Fields, Chicago.

page 195

Red Eurojersey tricolor tube dress $175 and blue Eurojersey arm chaps $125 both by John Bartlett women available at the Fashion Arena, Miami, Saks Fifth Avenue (select stores), Neiman Marcus (select stores), and Traffic, Beverly Hills, Calif.

page 196

Brown faux-fur coat $2,270 by Yohji Yamamoto available at Yohji Yamamoto, N.Y.C., Charivari, N.Y.C., and Wilkes Bashford, San Francisco; multicolored bias cut jersey sweater $550 and black wool jersey pant $620, both by COMME des GARÇONS HOMME PLUS by REI KAWAKUBO available at COMME des GARÇONS, N.Y.C., Ron Herman, Los Angeles, Calif., and Saks Fifth Avenue, San Francisco, Calif.

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Grey organza tunic $260 and grey ribbed wool mini skirt $180, both by Miu-Miu available at Miu-Miu, SOHO, N.Y.C., Fred Segal, and Louis of Boston.

VIBEStyle: "Uptown"

page199

Pink and green tweed coat with fur collar $1,100 by Vivienne Westwood Red Label.

page 200

Grey wool two-button suit $795 by Alberto Biani available at Scoop, N.Y.C. and Carol & Co., N.Y.C.; men's blue and white cotton shirt $85 by Polo Ralph Lauren available at Polo Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills, Saks Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C., and Bloomingdale's, N.Y.C.; red and black pinstripe suit $1,340 and red wool polo sweater $400, both by Jean Paul Gaultier Homme available at Traffic, L.A.

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Brown stripe viscose/wool jacket $635 and brown stripe tuxedo pant $335, both by Emporio Armani available at Emporio Armani stores nationwide; white cotton short-sleeve shirt $200 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana, N.Y.C. and Saks Fifth Avenue nationwide.

page 202

Fuchsia frill wrap dress $455 by Ghost available at Untitled, N.Y.C. and Traffic, L.A.; chocolate houndstooth wool one-button jacket $756 by John Bartlett available at Holt Renfrew (special order), Camouflage, N.Y.C., and M.A.C., San Francisco, and chocolate houndstooth self-belt pant $326 by John Bartlett available at Holt Renfrew (special order); black cotton/poplin shirt $145 by Patrick Cox available exclusively at Patrick Cox, N.Y.C.

page 203

Brown wool suit $1,102 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana, N.Y.C. and

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Saks Fifth Avenue nationwide; black wool jersey shaped jacket $580 by Vivienne Westwood Red Label available at Traffic, L.A., IF, N.Y.C., and Magazine, Fla., men's white cotton short-sleeve shirt $200 and black wool dress $750, both by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana, N.Y.C. and Saks Fifth Avenue nationwide.

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Silk floral wrap dress $1,245 by Moschino Couture available at select Neiman Marcus stores.

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Navy wool pinstripe single-breasted three-piece suit $835 by Polo Ralph Lauren available at Polo Ralph Lauren, Naples, Fla., Macy's, N.Y.C., Bloomingdale's, N.Y.C., white cotton dress shirt $85 by Polo Ralph Lauren available at Polo Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills, Saks Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C., and Bloomingdale's, N.Y.C.

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Red and black pinstripe suit $1,340 and red wool polo sweater $400, both by Jean Paul Gaultier Homme available at Traffic, L.A. Brown wool double-breasted suit $2,767 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana, N.Y.C. and Saks Fifth Avenue nationwide; brown wool windowpane polo sweater $360 by Patrick Cox available exclusively at Patrick Cox, N.Y.C.

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Grey wool two-button suit $795 by Alberto Biani available at Scoop, N.Y.C. and Carol & Co., N.Y.C.; blue and white cotton men's shirt $85 by Polo Ralph Lauren available at Polo Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills, Saks Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C., and Bloomingdale's, N.Y.C.

The *Stylist*: "Brave New World"

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Ebony belted leather jacket $2,270, sand cargo pants $350, loden poplin Oxford shirt $323, loden poplin tie $98, ebony rugby shoes with side buckles $495; ebano zip-front anorak $560, ebano gabardine ski pant $400, military green flannel Oxford shirt $275, oregano flannel tie $98, black rugby shoes with side buckles $495; military green three-button single-breasted suit $1,710, loden Oxford shirt $323, loden poplin tie $98, ebony leather trapper boots $555, all by Prada available at Prada, Madison Ave, N.Y.C., Prada, Bal Harbour Shops, Neiman Marcus, Chicago, and Neiman Marcus, Chevy Chase.

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Ardesia flannel ski jacket $1,030, fine wool V-neck sweater $374, gray wool trouser $330, anthracite flannel tie $98, black patent lace-up shoes $510, all by Prada available at Prada, Madison Avenue, N.Y.C., Prada, Bal Harbour Shops, Neiman Marcus, Chicago, and Neiman Marcus, Chevy Chase; anthracite stretch flannel suit $1,560, ardesia V-neck sweater $370, white stretch poplin Oxford $303, grey flannel tie $98, black patent lace-up shoes $510, anthracite flannel belt $158; black wool jersey hooded 3/4-length coat $950, gray cardigan sweater $204, white cotton popelin shirt $204, grey flannel trousers $330, diagonal-stripe tie $98, black patent lace-up shoes $510.

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Blue double-faced single-breasted jacket $1,330, white cashmere turtleneck $560, flannel trouser $330, black patent lace-up shoes $510; blue techno gabardine single-breasted jacket $1,310, blue techno-gabardine trouser $300, white cashmere turtleneck $470, black patent lace-up shoes $510; blue ribbed zip sweater $620, white turtleneck $340, blue denim stretch trouser $370, black patent lace-up shoes $510, all by Prada available at Prada, Madison Avenue, N.Y.C., Prada, Bal Harbour Shops, Neiman Marcus, Chicago, and Neiman Marcus, Chevy Chase.

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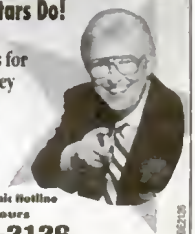

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2739	Brand New Heavies
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2276	Case
2421	Changing Faces
2669	Coolio
2971	Cypress Hill
3296	D'Angelo
3221	Da Brat
3552	DJ Kool
3642	Dogg Pound
2992	Boyz 4 Men
2729	Brand New Heavies
2725	Brandy
2276	Case
2421	Changing Faces
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2669	Coolio
2971	Cypress Hill
3296	D'Angelo
3221	Da Brat
3552	DJ Kool
3642	Dogg Pound
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3782	Dru Hill
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2766	Foxy Brown
3842	The Fugees
4871	Gyrl
4322	Heavy D
4231	Ice Cube
4862	Immature
5222	Janet Jackson
5294	Jay Z
5631	Jodeci
5861	Junior M.A.F.I.A.
7832	Karin Tweet
6741	Kris Kross
5771	KRS One
5453	Lil' Kim
5621	LL Cool J
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2271	Mariah Carey
2543	Mary J. Blige
6292	Maxwell
6384	Method Man
5271	Michael Jackson
6462	Mint Condition
6664	Monica
5673	Montell Jordan
6274	Nas
6281	Naughty By Nature
6384	New Edition
6683	Notorious B.I.G.
6323	Ol' Dirty Bastard
7742	Prince
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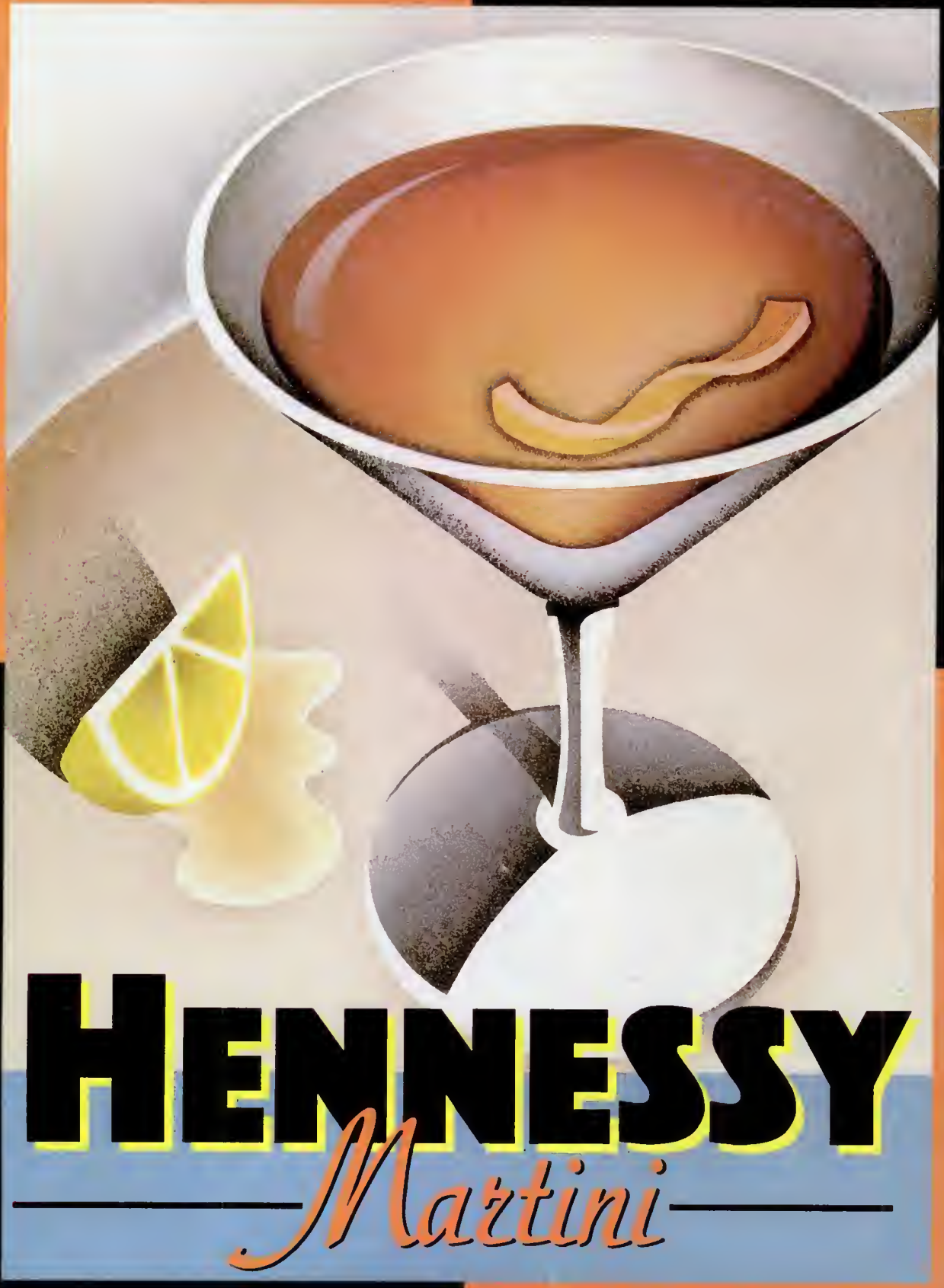

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